Robinson plans a tax crackdown on himself

Geoffrey Robinson, the millionaire businessman turned Treasury minister has blown the whistle on tax avoidance dodges - action that will add to his own tax bill. With the political storm still rumbling over his own family's offshore trust, Anthony Bevins, Political Editor, reports on

a determined fightback.

Tony Blair believes that Mr Robinson has done no wrong and, because he is adding value to the Government with a business expertise that is delivering fruit on issues like the windfall tax and finance for London Underground, he is determined to keep him. The Independent has been told that Mr Robinson will be staying on as a

Treasury minister. But Mr Robinson is playing another, more discreet role - helping to plug the tax leaks that are exploited by rich businessmen like himself.

As Paymaster General, Mr Robinson has no direct tax responsibilities, apart from a review of corporation tax. However, he has intervened to guide colleagues on the ins-and-outs of tax avoidance - advice that will increase his own eventual tax liabilities, possibly by opening up the revenues from his Guernsey-based family trust to UK tax.

A senior Treasury source told The Independent last night that he had seen the internal working papers which showed Mr Robinson's contribution to a new crackdown expected in next spring's Budget.

A Treasury spokesman said last night: "Personal tax matters are the responsibility of the financial secretary, Dawn Primarolo, and the Chancellor makes all the final decisions."

But a Treasury insider confirmed the minister's role on work against tax avoidance, adding: "Geoffrey's decades of business experience have provided useful insights, not just with the highly-successful windfall tax - but more widely."

Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer, said in his July Budget: "The tax burden avoided by the few falls on the many". He then announced plans to curb tax abuses that will raise £1.7bn over four years. He also instructed the Inland Revenue to carry out a wide-ranging review of all tax avoidance, including the whole

TODAY'S NEWS

approach to "the defeat and deterrence of tax-avoidance schemes".

Mr Brown said in a written Commons reply on Friday: "Both the Inland Revenue and Customs & Excise are also looking at the possibility of introducing a general antiavoidance rule." Such a rule could make tax avoidance, like tax evasion, illegal

In the Commons yesterday, Betty Boothroyd, the Speaker, warned Tory MPs not to "abuse and use" the proceedings of the House to get at Mr Robinson, after Peter Lilley, the shadow Chancellor, had complained that while Mr Robinson was refusing to answer Commons questions, he was giving interviews to newspapers.

Mr Lilley said earlier that new evidence had confirmed three charges against Mr Robinson - "charges of hypocrisy, of a conflict of interest and of being economical with the truth. He must start to give straight answers to the House of Commons not half the story to selected journalists."

Specifically, Mr Lilley said that the Robinson family's Orion Trust had been set up after Labour had published its 1994 policy statement, Tackling Tax Abuses. He asked whether Mr Robinson had been involved in setting up the trust, and, if so, whether he had been aware that he was acting against party policy.

The Prime Minister's spokesman said Mr Robinson had done nothing wrong, and all the transactions relating to the trust had taken place before he became a minister. "The first principle is that the Prime Minister - nobody else - will decide who is in his government. The second point is that he builds a government based upon a variety of skills and background and insight and expertise that we require in a government.

"He believes that Geoffrey Robinson has brought and continues to bring an expertise in the world of business that gives us an added dimension in government, which has already borne fruit in relation to the windfall tax, some of the discussions we have had on coal, the public-private finance arrangements John Prescott is trying to put together."

But Paul Flynn, the outspoken Labour MP, told the BBC radio's World at One: "The dismay of many Labour MPs and Labour Party members at the moment is that the Government are giving this terrible impression that we are being tough on the disabled and tough on single parents but soft on millionaire tax avoiders." Donald Macintyre, page 17



Come to the cabaret: A dancer from Club Tropicana prepares for the Cuban cabaret's first performance outside Havana in 58 years. The cast begin a world tour at the Royal Albert Hall in London in March. Yesterday some of the performers flew to Britain for a preview Photograph: Tom Pliston

INSIDE TODAY

When a man can't do it and a woman can't bear it HEALTH/I3



Too hot for his soup: The hippest new chef on the hob FEATURE/15

From Mussolini to The Full Monty: Men stripping off

COMMENT/I7



TELEVISION The Eye, page 12 CROSSWORDS Page 28 and The Eye, page 9
WEATHER. The Eye, page 10

Web address: http://www. independent.co.uk



At 16, Mary ran away from a life of abuse. Today she is homeless. Could you sleep easy on Christmas Eve knowing she was shivering in a bus shelter?

You can help keep Mary, and thousands of vulnerable people like her, safe and warm over Christmas. With £25 from you. Crisis can provide a warm bed, hot meals, clean clothes and someone to talk to at one of our shelters.

As the days count down to Christmas, over 4,000 homeless people are counting on Crisis. We're counting on you. Our service depends on public donations. So please send your £25 today - in time to help us buy the bedding, food and clothes we need to bring Mary

Countdown to Christmas

Yes, I'll keep homeless people warm: ☐ £15 ☐ £25 ☐ £50 ☐ £250° other £_ l enclose a cheque made payable to Crisis. OR debit my: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Switch[†] other _

* Gifts of £250 or more are worth almost a third extra to us under Gift Aid

racist attack.

lawfully killed during an unprovoked

In one of the few positive points con-

tained in yesterday's report, the PCA

found no evidence of any racist conduct

by officers involved in the investigation.

which they said was well resourced.

Detectives have been accused of giving the

case low priority because Stephen was

However, the vast bulk of the findings

are a scathing attack on the work of Scotland Yard. Among the mistakes were:

Several important "anonymous" in-

formers were never identified by the Met-

ropolitan police and further questioned.

However, the Kent officers were able to

Evidence about the identity of possible

suspects was available early on, yet the po-

lice failed to arrest anyone and therefore

lost the chance to obtain forensic evidence.

• The PCA report demolishes police

claims that their attempts to track down

Stephen's killers were hampered by a "wall

discover their names.

undetected.

Greenland meteor goes to ground under icecap

A large meteor crashed into Greenland last week, but nobody is exactly sure where. Fishermen saw the night sky light up as bright as daylight as the object took just two seconds to flash across the sky, travelling at 10 times the speed of sound, it was the event of the century, but now it may have buried itself under the icecap - and it would take someone with Miss Smilla's feeling for snow to find it.

Cunningham mauls EU

The Agriculture Minister, Jack Cunningham, criticised "fraudulent" EU governments as he imposed a unilateral ban on the import of beef not conforming to stringent safety-

From midnight last night, strict new rules on deboning came into force in Britain. Mr Cunningham said his European counterparts had "prevaricated and obfuscated" to avoid new anti-BSE health controls Page 8

Clark fails to get joke

The Tory MP Alan Clark was in the High Court claiming damages from the London Evening Standard over a spoof column, Alan Clark's Secret Political Diaries, which he claims is causing readers to believe it is actually written by

The newspaper is defending the column, written by one of its journalists. Peter Bradshaw, claiming it is a legitimate tease and that no one in their right minds would think it was written by Mr Clark. Page 3

Stephen Lawrence police weren't racists, just staggeringly incompetent

A report into the police investigation of the murder of black teenager Stephen Lawrence uncovered a large number of serious blunders. While the scale of the incompetence is staggering, says Jason Bennetto, Crime Correspondent, the police have been cleared of racism.

At least 11 potential leads went unchecked, according to the detectives examining the original Metropolitan Police inquiry into the stabbing of Stephen Lawrence four years ago. Potential witnesses and possibly vital evidence were ignored, and the investigation reveals a catalogue of lost opportunities and failures by Scotland Yard.

A preliminary report by the independent Police Complaints Authority is a damning indictment of the inquiry into the racist murder of Stephen, 18, who was stabbed to death at a bus stop near his home in Eltham, south-east London, by a gang of white youths in April 1993.

It concludes that there is "evidence of significant weaknesses, omissions and lost opportunities during the first murder inquiry". And it adds that the "serious shortcomings" were only uncovered hecause of the tenacity of Stephen's mother and father, Doreen and Neville, who brought a unsuccessful private prosecution and lobbied the Government.

Additionally, because an internal police inquiry failed to spot the earlier mistakes



Stephen Lawrence murdered in 1993

"subsequent attempts to solve the crime have been hampered".

Also, despite identifying 11 *potentially truitful lines of inquiry which have not yet been properly followed up", the PCA believes it is increasingly unlikely that the killers will ever be jailed as leads grow cold.

The unusual decision to publish the full details of the PCA findings, based on an inquiry carried out by detectives from Kent police force, were made on the order of Jack Straw, the Home Secretary. They will be submitted as evidence to the judicial inquiry into the murder which is due to being in February.

The inquiry was set up after five white youths were branded "murderers" by a national newspaper following their refusal to give evidence at an inquest in February which found that Stephen had been un-

Sir Paul Condon, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, said yesterday that he accepted the main findings of the report and apologised to the Lawrence family. He added that lessons had been learnt.

of silence". It found "considerable evi-dence" that the people of Eltham had come forward with valuable information. †Last three digits of Switch card no. 1 Switch issue no. 1 A key witness withdrew his co-operation because of the way he was handled by de-Expiry date ___/_Signature ___ tectives, and identification evidence was not properly analysed which may have resulted in at least one of the killers remaining OR please call our freephone donation line 0800 44 88 98 Crisis, FREEPOST, Room 923, London SE21 8BR

Details have been changed to protect identity.

X COLUMN ONE

Social lepers only in new 'social exclusion unit'

Writing in this newspaper last week. Tony Blair announced the setting up of a new Social Exclusion Unit to help the underprivileged so that 'each person no matter what their background should have the chance to suc-

Yesterday, the Labour-run Glasgow City Council revealed its own idea of a Social Exclusion Unit in the form of a housing ghetto into which it will drive all tenants who it deems to have behaved anti-socially.

While the prime minister was trying to rescue what was left of his party's caring image during yesterday's social security debate in the Commons, the head of Glasgow's housing committee. James McCarron, was laying into "those who refuse to live normally".

He detailed plans to subject certain tenants to "resocialisation programmes" - including child psychology for their children - and called for central government to provide extra funding to pay for the initiative.

"What we're going to do with those people is marginalise them and if it has to be that they have to live in a ghetto, then so be it," he said. "But I'm not going to tell decent people they've got to live beside drug dealers and hooligans. My sincere belief is that we could have an area where

we could put those unfortunate people and rehabilitate them." The councillor's comments will have caused embarrassment in Millbank where strategists will be auxious to correct the idea that the housing ghettos are part of the Government's national social programme.

But they illustrate the frustrations experienced by local authorities in dealing with the sharp end of urban deprivation.

Mr McCarron spoke out shortly after it was revealed that a multi-million pounds housing scheme, which had been approved by him as housing convener, is to be demolished. More than £2.7m had been spent on trying to rebuild one of Glasgow's most deprived areas, South Balornock. But 10 years after the project was completed, one part, Avonspark Street, is said to resemble a "war zone" after being systematically destroyed by local residents. The street is to be demolished at a further cost of £500,000.

Although Mr McCarron's proposal for "resocialisation" of tenants has not yet been approved by Glasgow council, a similar scheme has already been established in Dundee.

A housing estate has been set aside for council tenants who have proved to be anti-social and as part of their tenancy agreements, they must agree to take part in a rehabilitation programme. This includes youngsters working with child psychologists, drug addicts receiving counselling and flats surrounded by closed-circuit television cameras.

Mr McCarron, whose views can be heard tonight on BBC's Frontline Scotland programme, admitted it was a depressing vision for the future but said the South Balornock experience showed there was no alternative. "We have spent millions trying to transform poor and inadequate housing estates into homes which people should be proud of and this is how

"If you're anti-social or a drug dealer, hopefully in the future we'll take you out and we'll take you into an area where we have child psychologists to deal with your kids and people to deal with you."

Professor Duncan MacLennan, of the Centre for Urban Studies at Glasgow University, blamed the physical deterioration of the estate on a lack of community spirit.

"One essentially has a group of people who are relatively isolated from each other, let alone the city, then there's the severe question about whether or not pouring in money will have any real effect," he said.

"In fact I'd say it would have no real effect in the long term and is just a waste of public money."

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PEOPLE



Bren Jones: I have had minor problems in the past but nothing like this

Freefall skydiver tells of miracle escape

vived after his chute became entangled with another skydiver 2,000ft above ground.

Bren Jones, 56, suffered only bruising when he landed in a soft ploughed field with his parachute and that of a fellow jumper flapping above him.

The incident happened on Sunday midway through a free-fall jump from 5,500ft above Hibaldstow, near Scunthorpe, Humberside. Speaking from his bed at Lincoln Hospital. Mr Jones, a businessman, said: "We flew to 5,000ft

and jumped freefall and then I fell for about 3,000 ft before opening my chute. Then I was blown into a fellow jumper and the canopies became entangled. "My fellow jumper shouted he was going to dis-

engage. He managed to free himself and opened his reserve chute and he landed OK.

"I was stuck with the two parachutes tangled up together. I couldn't get free or do anything I was just falling. I don't know how fast I was going, just painfully fast. I didn't have time to think about anything. I

A British parachutist described yesterday how he sur- certainly didn't have time to think about if I was going to live or die. All I knew was that it was going

> "I blacked out before I hit the ground but landed on soft ploughed fields." Trevor Dobson, chief instructor at Target Skys-

> ports, which operates from Hibaldstow Airfield, saw the incident through binoculars. He said Mr Jones's parachute had opened but not fully. However, the combined drag of the two unopened chutes slowed him down enough to save his life. John Hitchen, safety officer for the British Para-

> chute Association, said: "What apparently happened is that the two jumpers became entangled but they both kept their cool and at the last minute the other jumper managed to get free." In spite of his scare, Mr Jones plans to jump again

> "I have had minor problems in the past but certainly nothing like this," he said. "It is my hobby and when I get better I will certainly do it again."

'Full Monty' star keen to protect his privacy

the hit films Trainspotting and The Full Monty - yesterday warned the media to keep out of his pri-

Speaking at the launch of a new BBC Scotland drama serial, the ac-inburgh housing-estate in 1982 the Sighthill and Wester Hailes artor said that he was happy with press coverage as long as it related to his work, but got angry close-knit community. when his private life was mentioned. "I'm cool with it in terms Trainspotting, writer Frank Deasy to be accepted because of the Begof my work. It's when my private life starts to come out I get really angry. It's basically nobody's business but mine.`

The outburst follows reports of his planned wedding to girlfriend Anastasia Shirley at exclusive Skibo Castle in Sutherland, owned by businessman Peter de Savary.

But weddings were far from the star's mind yesterday as he spoke

Goodfella" in Looking After Io Io trendy about Io Io." - a controversial four-part drama which has been compared to inburgh and Glasgow during the

Trainspotting. The drama is set in a poor Ed-

described his drama as being bie role." about "drugs and war" whereas the film was about "drugs and the ball supporter, was also asked youth culture".

And Carlyle, who played hardman Begbie in the award-winning nancial crisis. "I love Thistle, they film, said of his character: "If I Begbie all over again, I wouldn't

have done it. "Trainspotting was very stylistic. staff there for a year is a disgrace."

The actor Robert Carlyle - star of about his role as an "Edinburgh I don't think there's anything

The drama was filmed in Edsummer of 1997 and Carlyle spent a lot of time with people living in and tells the story of criminal ac- cas of Edinburgh to research his tivity and drug-dealing among a role. "I know those people extremely well now and made a lot But despite comparisons to of friends. It was very easy for me

Carlyle, a Partick Thistle footabout the plight of his favourite club who are in the midst of a fiare a great wee club. Clubs the size thought it was going to be like of Celtic and Rangers should help out. The fact Paul Gascoigne's wages for a week could pay the

UPDATE

PSYCHOLOGY

Taxi drivers head aggression league

New research suggests that taxi drivers are more aggressive drivers who are less likely to look out for hazards on the roads and cope in a more confrontational manner while put under stress while driving.

A study carried out by the University of Teesside looked at a variety of drivers and how they coped with the stresses of driving in a busy city. They questioned police drivers, heavy goods vehicle drivers, commuters,

occasional drivers as well as taxi drivers, and came to the conclusion that taxi drivers were the most distinctive in the aggression they displayed to othor road users and the fact that they coped with stress in a confrontational way. They were also the most likely group to say they disliked driving. The researchers, who are presenting their study at the British Psycho-

logical Society's winter conference today, looked at five groups of 20 drivers. Taxi drivers were much more likely than other groups to be thrill-seeking with HGV drivers being the second most likely group to look. for thrills. HGV drivers were significantly more likely to look out for gotential dangers on the roads than cabbies.

In comparison police drivers scored lowest on aggressive driving, were low on thrill seeking and were the best at monitoring potential hazards on the roads. Taxi drivers were also far more likely to cope with a stressful situation by becoming aggressive and confrontational, with HGV drivers and commuters the next most likely groups to use antagonistic means. - Glenda Cooper, Social Affairs Correspondent



ENVIRONMENT

Christmas will claim 250,000 trees

Britain's Christmas will leave a body count of around a quarter of a m lion slain trees, the environment group Friends of the Earth claims today This year in the UK, the fifth-largest paper user in the world, an esti

mated 1.7 billion greetings cards will be sent, using 200,000 trees. At ther 50,000 trees will go to wrap presents in 8,000 tons of paper. Present of the Earth has criticised high-street stores for not stocking re-cycled products. "Major retailers deserve to be named and shamed for their lack of concern," Georgina Green of Friends of the Earth said. The public should also be doing more, she said. FoE recommends re-using gift wrap and sticking labels on cards for use next year.

HEALTH .

Lottery 'leads to compulsive fear'

Playing the National Lottery becomes a fearful compulsion for people who use the same numbers every week, according to researchers.

People keep playing through fear that their numbers will come up when they have missed a go or changed their numbers, Pam Briggs and Sandra Wolfson, from the University of Northumbria, found in their recent study of lottery players. The psychologists state that "anticipatory regret" - imagining the potentially negative consequences of changing behaviour - provides more motivation than excitement at the prospect of a potential win in buying lottery tickets. Even for those who buy a ticket, pessimism is rife. The study found that many dream of winning in the future, but few think a win is likely in the foreseeable future.

TOURIST RATES

| | l . • | | | |
|---|----------------------|--------|------------------------|----------------------|
| | Australia (dollars) | 2.42 | Italy (lira) | 2,789 |
| | Austria (schillings) | 19.96 | Japan (yen) | 213.64 |
| | Belgium (francs) | 58.68 | Malta (lira) | 0.62 |
| | Canada (\$) | 2.28 | Netherlands (guilders) | 3.19 |
| | Cyprus (pounds) | 0.83 | Norway (kroner) | . 11,73 |
| | Denmark (kroner) | Ю.89 | Portugal (escudos) | 287.24 |
| | France (francs) | 9.52 | Spain (pesetas) | 240.03 |
| | Germany (marks) | 2.85 | Sweden (kroner) | 12.53 |
| i | Greece (drachmei) | 450.05 | Switzerland (francs) | 2.28 |
| | Hong Kong (\$) | 12.38 | Turkey (lira) | 318, 161 |
| | Ireland (punts) | 1.08 | USA (\$) | 1.60 |
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right) to pull out of a longawaited concert last night and another tomorrow. Pavarotti, the man with the

Flu forced the opera singer Luciano Pavarotti (pictured

Fourth tenor

fills in for ill

Pavarotti

tomorrow. "He has been advised not to travel," a Philhar-

But the concerts are going head with Roberto Alagna, the leading tenor of the next generation. filling in for Pavarotti.

fourth tenor, and we are very grateful such a big name has been able to perform at such short notice," she said.

Pavarotti who, like his near contemporaries Jose Carreras and Placido Domingo, has been at the top of the operatic tree for more than 20 years, could not have more glamorous - or more symbolic - a stand-in than Alagna. With his partner, the soprano Angela Gheorghiu. the Franco-Sicilian has become a media darling in the last five years while making a sequence of award-winning recital dises and opera recordings, including Puccini's I.a Rondine and





ighest, and broadest, profile of the "Three Tenors", was to have been the tenor soloist in Verdi's Requiem at Symphony Hall, Birmingham, yesterday. and with the Philharmonia at the Royal Festival Hall, London,

monia spokesworgan said.

"He has been called the

Alagna was flying in from Milan vesterday, back again for a performance at La Scala today and to Britain again for the Royal Festival Hall tomorrow, she said.

Donizetti's L'Elisir d'Amore.





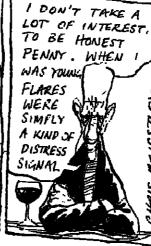
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by Chris Priestley

by Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman









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Social Affairs

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Why death of Diana was good for our health

The death of Diana, Princess of Wales, led to a significant decrease in people seeking help for depression, according to psychiatric clinics. Admissions fell by up to 50 per cent in some cases. One explanation says Glenda Cooper, Social Affairs

Correspondent, is that the public mourning helped people come to terms with private problems.

The outpouring of grief after the death of Diana, Princess of Wales allowed people to release deeply-buried emotions relating to personal problems they had chosen

A survey carried out by Speciality Care, a nationwide group of private clinics which also takes NHS referrals, reported a drop in admissions for a range of general psychiatric illuesses. In some cases there was a drop of 50 per cent.

Drops were most commonly seen in those suffering neurotic problems such as anxiety and stress, rather than the severely psychotic patients. Clinics in London, where there are more mental health patients, also reported a "lull" in referrals.

"The death of Diana acted as a catharsis," said Dianne Trueman, clinical manger of Sutton's Manor Clinic in Essex. "When they cried for Diana, many people - and particularly men who often have trouble

not to deal with, psychiatric experts said expressing emotions - found they could also y for themselves allowing the release of all the repressed emotions that had built up in their life. The long-term effect of such behaviour can often lead to the development of mental health problems."

> At one point in her clinic, which takes NHS referrals, she had filled only 12 out of 27 beds. "It is unprecedented," she said.

Other factors also played a part the experts found: the windfall gains from building societies, the election and the late onset of winter all helped to create a "feelgood"

"There's significant benefit from a good old cry and the death of Diana gave people the licence to do just that," said Haydn Lunn, manager of the Dove Clin-

Dr Stephen Palmer, director of the Ceutre for Stress Management, said he too had noticed a "lull" in admissions, although it was impossible to say whether this had been caused by Diana's death. "When there are big events you find there is less depression. They act as a wonderful distraction ... there were so many people who were upset who would not be normally because they were grieving for themselves. It was therapeutic without the need for therapy. This trend

could be very interesting." And Cosmo Hallstrom, a member of the Royal College of Psychiatrists' public education committee, said he also had seen "dramatic reduction" in admissions at the Charter Clinic in Chelsea, although he also said that this could not be put down solely to Diana. "We are very sensitive to fluc-

tuations in the NHS ... but personally I think it is more likely to affect people at the milder end of depression. I don't think it would have any effect on the serious cases of psychosis." He said that admissions were now beginning to rise again three months on from her death.

"Many found themselves overwhelmed both by her loss and by the feelings it revived from their past and present lives," said Professor Janet Sayers, who contributed to a special edition of The Psychologist which looked at reactions to Diana's death. "The nation's reaction ... has signalled even more strongly a change of heart - towards recognising our community with one another and the importance ... of being open to, voicing and sharing our feelings as she did with us."

IN TOMORROW'S INDEPENDENT

FASHION

What men don't know about women's underwear



THEATRE What else is lost with The Old Vic

CITY + Christmas parties: Who's harassing whom?



Star trek: Julia Ormond in Smillo's Feeling for Snow, the film from a book in which a meteor hits Greenland; and a case of life imitating art following the events of last week

Search for Greenland's fallen meteor

week. The hunt for it goes on, but it would take someone with Miss Smilla's feeling for snow to find it. This, however, is real life. Charles Arthur, Science Editor, investigates another narrow escape.

Two spotter planes were yesterday searching the southern tip of Greenland for the telltale signs of the huge meteorite impact that happened last week, but of which news

has only just begun to trickle out. The size of the meteorite, which lit up the dark morning sky on 9 December, could rival that of the Tunguska meteorite, a body 50 to 100 metres across, which exploded in the air over Siberia in June 1908. The en-

A dense meteor crashed into the ergy released was equivalent to a 15-mega-stayed solid." But he said it was impossitonne bomb, and flattened trees across hun- ble at present to estimate the size of the dreds of square kilometres. Such events happen only a couple of times a century.

Fishermen and early morning risers saw the sky brighten to daylight at 5.10am, as what eyewitnesses called a green streak flashed across the sky in a period estimated hetween 2 and 5 seconds. No one was able to photograph it - though in the town of Nuuk a car-park video surveillance camera aimed at the ground did record the incredible brightening of ambient light.

Seconds later, seismographic equipment recorded a 10-second shockwave.

"It was seen all over the southern part of Greenland," Holge Pedersen, of Copenhagen University, told The Independent yesterday. "It wasn't like most meteor falls, which break up about 20 to 30km up and take a couple of minutes to reach the ground. This was travelling really fast and

Qagortoq meteorite - named, by tradition, from the nearest post office. The early signs are that the meteorite was travelling at about Mach 10 - 7,600mph. Had it hit a major

city the effect would have been disastrous. On landing it would be incredibly hot, and melt its way through the icecap - which would then freeze over it, hiding it, though

a cloud of water vapour could be let off. If the description sounds familiar, that's because a buried meteorite in Greenland is one of the essential plot elements in Peter Hoeg's hugely popular book Miss Smilla's

Feeling for Snow, recently made into a film. But this was not a publicity stunt, and the lessons from this event may be worrying. There are an estimated 100,000 objects bigger than a kilometre wide floating around the solar system close enough to pose a threat to Earth.

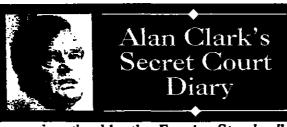


Mr Pepys goes to court against Grub Street

Monday, I5 December,

8.30am. Am off to Royal Courts of Justice, for the opening of my case against that dreary rag, the London Evening Standard. which has been running a limp parody of my own sharp and beautifully-judged diary, under the byline of a low, hacking fellow called Peter Bradshaw, My case hinges on convincing people that this nonsense, appearing under my photograph, could he misread as my own work. I wonder how the rest of the Press will report the case. Hope no other ghastly scribblers think it amusing to parody the parody. I cut a dashing figure in my Savile Row suit. Expecting a tedious day, I cheer myself up by taking the Jag to 97mph in The Strand. scattering a group of office workers on a zebra crossing. 10am: Arrive at the High Court. a rather "nouveau" building nothing like as grand as my own beloved Saltwood Castle. Meet Geoffrey Hobbs, my estimable QC, and an assortment of solicitors including a fetching young woman with long, dark hair. On entering Court 60. I find the public gallery packed with onlookers, admirers and others

who, judging by their slovenly ap-



...as imagined by the Evening Standard's Peter Bradshaw who is, in turn, parodied by our own Kathy Marks

Majesty's Press Corps. I also spy the wretched Bradshaw, a balding figure slumped on a bench at the back. I avoid acknowledging him, save for a slight curl of the lip.

10,30am: Hobbs, a sober fellow, begins outlining our case. He says that the Standard has failed to make clear that its column. cheekily headed Alan Clark's Secret Political Diary, is not penned by yours truly. It must be said that I would sooner cut off my right hand than stoop to writing such inferior trash. I want the diary withdrawn, and handsome damages, Hobbs recalls how the editor, Max Hastings, offered me my own column soon after I won the Kensington and Chelsea nomination. He explains to Mr Juspearance, are members of Her tice Lightman that I turned it ton Hall, my own firm of solie- Prescott tomorrow.

down because Hastings was offering a paltry £60.000 a year as recompense.

10.45am: I strike a gloriously

languid pose of wounded dignity, eyes modestly cast down. Hobbs describes how, on meeting Max at the Chelsea Flower Show last summer, I asked him to pull the offending diary but he refused to play ball. I used to think Max was one of us, but now I'm not so sure. As Hobbs drones on about legal precedents. I dart a glance across at the court usher, a well-preserved redhead with a fine figure beneath her black robe. 11.40am: A succession of witnesses take the stand to declare their conviction that I, and not Bradshaw, was the author of the

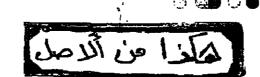
itors, while others are old pals, such as Bob Worcester of Mori. The Standard's OC. Peter Prescott, fancies himself as a bit of a wit. He paces around theatrically while asking questions, and affects a tone of langourous scepticism. 12.59am: Adjourn to a nearby

hostelry for a thoroughly en-2pm: Charles Walker, agent for my TV and film rights, describes my Diaries as "Pevpsian". Paperback copies of

my notorious ocuvre are then passed around. Excellent; further sales are guaranteed. Prescott reads out the passage about the woman with the "bouncing globes" with whom I once had the good fortune to share a compartment on a train. Ah. fond memories!

3pm: Reference is made to Clive James, a vulgar Antipodean broadcaster who wrote to Bradshaw expressing his admiration for the spoof column. My gaze drifts to the public gallery, where I catch sight of an exquisite creature with rosebud lips and bedroom eyes. Was it my imagination, or did the faintest thrill of electricity pass between us?

4.30pm: Court adjourns. Look forward to crossing swords with



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Vapour cure at hand for long-term smokers

A new device like a plastic pen top, launched today, could provide the assistance hardened smokers need to give up. Jeremy Laurance, Health Editor, taiks to one woman who says it has helped her to break a

decades-old habit.

Sue Bargery has tried everything during her 38-year smoking career. Willpower, group therapy, nicotine chewing gum, nicotine patches - most of which have made worse her addiction to cigarettes. But now, with a simple plastic device that allows her to suck nicotine vapour directly into her mouth, she believes she has turned the out cigarettes."

"Each time I have gone smoked more. When they and smoke in the cigarette other products. breaks. I have found this lat-

est product quite amazing." to 30 eigarettes a day.

She volunteered for a trial of the new Nicorette In- pressure group, said the device halator out of desperation and curiosity.

tube like a cigarette holder with are more likely to be put off by replaceable cartridges of nico- the cost. If it [and similar tine. By sucking on the tube the products] were available at a smoker can obtain a dose of subsidised rate more people nicotine equivalent to a third would stop smoking and more of that in a cigarette but with- lives would be saved."

out cancer-causing lungfuls of

Mrs Bargery said: "For long-term smokers it is not so much the nicotine that counts as having something in your hand to put in your mouth and mess about with. Nothing else dealt with that."

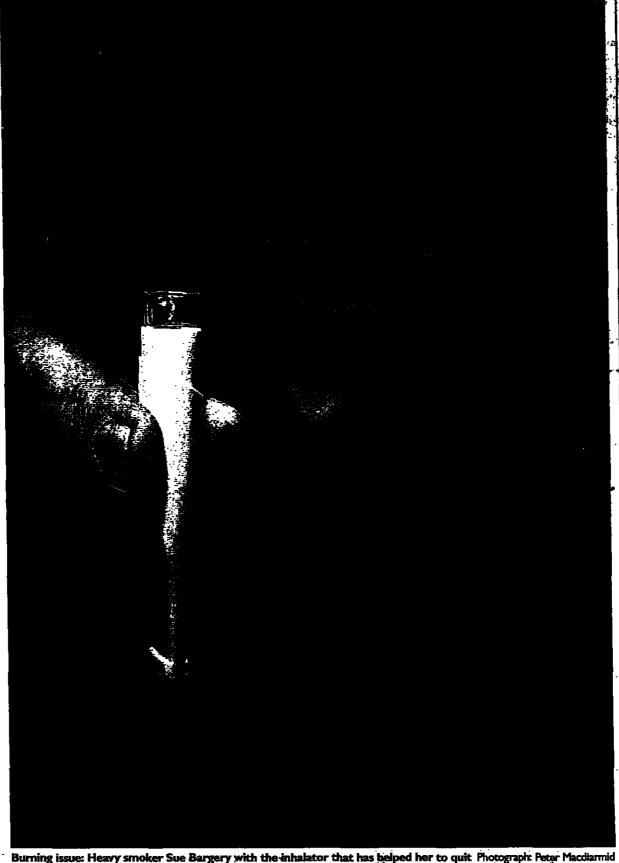
The nicotine is absorbed through the membranes of the mouth more quickly than from chewing gum or patches. But because it is not hot, as in a cigarette, it is not volatile enough to be drawn down into the lungs so does not deliver the nicotine "hit" that smokers get from cigarettes.

"I suffered quite severe depression when I tried to give up. I was miserable and irritable. But with this I have not had the withdrawal symptoms and I am getting used to doing with-

There are an estimated 8 million smokers who would back to smoking, I have like to quit in the United Kingdom, and trials have shown that banned smoking in the office the inhalator can double the I used to chew nicotine gum success rates achieved with

It is being sold over the counter, without a prescription. Mrs Bargery, 51, an ad- and costs £5.95 for a starter ministrator at Surrey Univer- pack and £19.95 for a week's sity, has smoked since she was supply of refills, about the 13 and was getting through 25 same as the cost of smoking 20 cigarettes a day.

ASH, the anti-smoking should be available on the NHS. Clive Bates, the group's The inhalator is a plastic director, said: "Poor smokers



Burning issue: Heavy smoker Sue Bargery with the inhalator that has belped her to quit Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

'Living miserably' targeted by anti-suicide campaign

its among young men have doubled in a decade, and the Government is aiming iv to stem the rising tide. Glenda Cooper, Social Affairs Correspondent, looks at yesterday's launch of the Campaign Against Living Miserably.

Last year 280 young men aged

decade. Compared to suicide, 84 died as a result of using drugs, 10 men in that age group died from heart disease and five men from Aids.

Suicide is three times as common in men as it is in eventually dying by suicide by 100 times, according to an earlier report by the Samaritans. Factors associated with youth suicide include drugs and alcobetween 15 and 24 took their hol - with about one in three own lives - a death toll second adolescent suicides intoxicated only to road accidents. It is a at the time of death, and a fur-

ence of drugs.

Yesterday, the Government launched a free and confidential helpline to try to stop the increasing numbers of young men who kill themselves. It will give advice, referrals and women. A suicide attempt in- counselling to depressed callers creases someone's chance of and will also aim to raise awareness of the problem and break down the stigma surrounding mental illness and depression.

The helpline was launched in Manchester, which has twice the national rate of suicide, the worst record of panic attacks in the world and a formula as-

showed that Manchester ranked first overall in the UK.

The Campaign Against Living Miserably (Calm) helpline will be operated by Network Scotland, and calls will be answered by a team of counsellors and youth workers experienced in dealing with problems faced by young people.

An advertising campaign devised by the agency Ogilvy & Mather will run in pubs, clubs and men's magazines and is sponsored by local restaurants, record shops and nightclubs such as Factory Records Lim-

Manchester Bus Company Launching the campaign,

Paul Boateng, the health minister, said: "It is a tragedy that young people, who should have so much hope, suffer such despair. We are wasting our young people in every sense of the word. Problems are understandable: studying, finding work and coping with life are all tough to deal with, but what everyone should remember is that there is never no one to talk

to, death is not the solution." people around us who may need

is 'look out for your mates'."

Despite the increase in suicides by young men, the British "stiff upper-lip" is still there, apparently, with more than a third of under-25s thinking that depressed people should simply pull themselves together. Yet a recent study by the Samaritans found that 29 per cent of the 500 young people they interviewed knew someone who had died by suicide, of which 16 per cent had lost a friend or family member. • The helpline number, open "We all need to look out for from 5pm to 9am seven days a week, is 0800 585858.

America turns to steroids in an effort to boost girl power

Body-building anabolic steroids can bring nasty side-effects, and increasingly male athletes avoid them. But, as David Usborne discovers, a new segment of society is experimenting with them: girls.

It is a problem traditionally associated with men; the illegal use of anabolic steroids to enhance physical prowess. Now, however, parents in the United States are being told to watch out for girls taking the drugs as well.

A study published this week by Penn State University suggests that while steroid use by young men may have bottomed over recent years, thanks to portion of girls to have experitougher laws and stern warnings about their potential side effects, increasing numbers of compared with 0.8 per cent in teenage girls are now falling a study conducted in 1991. prey to the drugs.

The reasons appear to be varied. For some girls, steroid consumption brings the promise of achieving leaner, meaner bodies without having to resort to starvation, and risking cating disorders like anorexia and bulimia. But more important may be the increasing numbers of

women in America hoping to think it's appropriate to say in continue higher education after school. To win such a scholarnot a big deal," he said. ship, which can be worth thou-

sands of dollars, women must have high-performing bodies. "There are popular assumptions out there that boys want to build the muscle and therefore take the steroids, and that girls want to get lighter and Publicity about steroid abuse so have an anorexia problem or an eating disorder," Donna Lopiano of the Womens' Sporting Foundation, told the Asso-

The study showed that among American girls in 12th grade - mostly 17-year-olds some 2.4 per cent admitted to trying the illegal steroids at some point. Even among 10th graders (15-year-olds), the promented with the drugs had grown to 1.4 per cent last year.

ciated Press. "It's not that

the report, which has been published in the Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine, acknowledges that the number of girls using steroids is still small. But he insists it represents a growing problem.

"Does this concern me as much as tobacco use? Ab- even when the consumption of athletic scholarships on offer to solutely not. But neither do I steroids is terminated.

any way, shape or form that it's

The steroids are based on the male hormone testosterone. They can be swallowed or injected. It is often hard for authorities to detect illegal steroid consumption because the hor-

usually comes from sporting events when athletes are disqualified for testing positive for steroids. Men's weightlifting in this country was rocked recently when nine members of the 15-member USA Weightlifting Programme in Colorado were expelled for steroid use.

of side effects on anyone who takes them. They include subtle personality changes such as an increased tendency towards violence, aggression and shortness of temper. More gravely, doctors warn of increased blood Chris Yesalis, an author of pressure and possibly fatal

damage to the heart and liver. Girls, meanwhile, should be aware of dangers specific to them, including increased acne, a lowering of the voice, a shrinking of the breasts and enlargement of the clitoris. Some of the symptoms will not go away

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iron lady: Women in the US are turning to drugs to ease the pain of muscle-gain

South Wales child abuse inquiry spreads to 33 homes

Detectives in South Wales are investigating allegations of child abuse at 33 children's homes. Roger Dobson reports on one of Britain's biggest child abuse inquiries, triggered by the suicide of a care worker nine years ago.

Operation Goldfinch, launched the number of children's homes have joined those in Clwyd and

in Wales where allegations of Gwynedd where the North Wales whatever resources were need-who put them there, but O'Brien there have been police investi-

Detectives in South Wales are now investigating claims of sexual and physical abuse at 33 children's homes, where more than 250 individual allegations by former residents make the inquiry one of Britain's biggest into child abuse. With the latest inquiry, homes in Cardiff, Swansea, Bridgend Neath Port Talbot. yesterday in South Wales, takes and the South Wales Valleys,

"The allegations range from minor physical abuse to the most serious sexual assault," a police spokesman said yesterday. Allegations of abuse at homes

tigating over 500 complaints.

also been made to detectives in Cardiff and have been passed to other forces for investigation.

A squad of 42 detectives has been set up by South Wales Police and Chief Constable Tony a left luggage locker at Cardiff the time, West Midlands Police Burden said yesterday that railway station. It is not known carried out an independent intact them. It is a result of what years they made me think I was

an inquiry whose scale is likely to rival that of investigations in Cheshire, North Wales and

The events which led up to the launch of Operation in areas outside South Wales have Goldfinch yesterday have their roots in the suicide of a care worker, Alan O'Brien, nine years ago. Following his death, two large suitcases containing paedophile material were found in

abuse have been made or where Abuse Tribunal has been investigated over an allegation of abuse on Merseyside. Around the time of his

death, he was working at the Taff Valc Children's Home in Cardiff. No wider action was taken at the time, but last year an inquiry was launched at the home following the jailing of another care worker for abuse.

Following claims that the discovery of the suitcases in 1989 should have been acted upon at

vestigation. The Crown Prosecution Service has decided that there is sufficient evidence to prosecute a former director of social services in South Glamorgan, and the former head of Taff Vale, for the alleged offence of misconduct in public office.

In September last year, Cardiff social services formally asked the police to investigate allegations of abuse at Taff Vale. South Wales police began the investigation using a helpline to allow former residents to con-

police were told by former residents five other homes that were being looked at, and yesterday a second inquiry looking at 27 other homes was launched.

It is the seventeenth and latest of a series of major police investigations in abuse at children's homes in Britain. As with many of the other inquires, most of the claims relate to the Seventies and Eighties.

One man who has given evidence to the North Wales Tribunal told The Independent, "For

to blame for what happened:. it was only when my son was born two years ago that I knew I had to do something. I looked at him and decided that I would do everything I could to make sine the men who abused me never

abused any other child."

A helpline has been supply by the police on 01656-369484 for complainants and witnesses to contact.

• Two other former Taff Vale staff have been charged with offences, and a third man aged 50 was arrested yesterday.

Police

abuse

leave

sickness

Almost 400,000 working

days are lost every year

through officers in the

taking time off sick. Joson

Correspondent, says that

a report published today

About 1,500 police officers are

absent from work in London

every day due to illness or in-

jury, and the number continues

A report by the National Au-

dit Office, the public spending

watchdog, says that only 13 per

cent of the absences are due to

injuries sustained on duty, while

there has been a big rise in days

abuse of sick leave is difficult to prove, long-term absence relies

on certificates from doctors

which are "often on the basis of

only a brief consultation and

who may be reluctant to offend

a patient". It adds that sanctions

against abusers are "limited"

and that £6.3m could be saved

The study comes at a time

when there is growing concern

about the number of police of-

ficers retiring on medical

grounds - including some who

are leaving to avoid allegations

of corruption and malpractice

which now costs £330m a year.

In some forces, three-quarters

of officers use ill health to re-

reduced by one day a year.

It notes that while outright

lost to stress and depression.

suggests the system is

being abused and

pounds.

wasting millions of

Metropolitan Police

Bennetto, Crime

Robbers attack airline magnate

A multi-millionaire airline tycoon has been beaten and robbed at his home. Alexandra Williams points out that the raid is only the latest in a series of violent assaults and robberies on wealthy London residents.

Tony Ryan, the owner of the lowcost, no frills airline Ryanair, has been attacked by robbers who forced their way into his west iewels.

Mr Ryan, who has an esti-£150m, was ambushed as he and in July last year as he tried to a female companion left his shield his wife Slavica, who had home. Two men forced the a £650,000 diamond ring couple back inside the house in snatched from her finger outside Cadogan Square, Chelsea, and their home. A month later, the insisted that Mr Ryan reveal the wife of Christopher Moran, a safe combination number.

millionaire was beaten to the gers who ambushed the famiground. The men grabbed £400 in cash and jewellery and escaped in a car. Detectives have Moran was pinned to the not ruled out the possibility that the raid is linked to a string of off her £15,000 Rolex watch and violent assaults on wealthy Lon-



Tony Ryan: Refused to reveal safe combination

SWIFTCALL

don residents. Gangs have tergeted people leaving shops such as Harrods and Harvey Nichols in expensive cars and followed them home. The victims have been attacked as they got out of their vehicles or as they were about to enter their homes.

Police believe this was the method used by the gang who held Michael Green, the chairman of Carlton Communications, and his wife Tessa, at knife point at their Mayfair home in April. And, in February, Lady Weidenfeld, wife of the publishing millionaire Lord Wei-London home, punching him to denfeld, was robbed of nearly the ground and stealing cash and £110,000 in jewellery on the doorstep of her Chelsea home.

The Formula One chief mated personal fortune of Bernie Ecclestone was attacked multi-millionaire City financier, When he refused, the multi- fought with a gang of five mugly in the underground car park of their Chelsea home. Helen ground as the gang wrenched

> grabbed her handbag. Recent assaults have also included the mugging of a Saudi Arabian diplomat, whose £95,000 Mercedes was stolen. and an attack on the Earl of Dudley and his wife at their Kensington mansion.

John, heading the inquiry into congested. Saturday's robbery, said: "It's ones but we can't rule out the possibility."

Mr Ryan suffered minor injuries. Police said the two men they are hunting in connection with the attack are both black, in their twenties and 6ft tall.

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Landmark: A demonstrator climbing between poplar trees in a park in Kingston, south-west London. The trees, which will obscure river views from a development of luxury apartments, are threatened with felling; Kingston Council votes on their fate tonight

Congested skies will mean more flight delays

Detective Constable Gareth skies become ever more

too early to say whether this at- set to grow by 6 per cent a year more aircraft could be delayed." tack is connected to previous until 2000, and no sign of new equipment to deal with the exloitering at the boarding gate. "Assuming traffic growth re- minutes.

mains high, a rise in the level of

air traffic control will probably With air passenger numbers not lengthen next year ... but

About 9 per cent of UK flights were delayed by air traftra flights, more holidaymakers fic capacity limitations in sumare likely to spend time mer 1997. The flights held up were, on average, delayed for 15

The matter is made worse as delays is possible next year," said the new centre at Swanwick, de-

Hindley officer disciplined

A police officer who helped the dying mother of moors' mur-

der victim Lesley Ann Downey when she attended Myra Hind-

ley's High Court appeal has been disciplined for his actions.

has just weeks to live, telephoned Detective Constable Nor-

man Brennan, director of the Victims of Crime Trust. to ask

for his help in arranging transport and accommodation for

cision that she must spend the rest of her life in jail.

Hindley was appealing against the Home Secretary's de-

DC Brennan, 38, who has become a family friend of the

Wests, took time off from his duties to collect Mrs West and

her husband Alan in a CID car and take her to the court.

Press photographers snapped him helping Mrs West into court

and he was subsequently disciplined for his conduct. Last

Thursday he was transferred to uniformed duties and repri-

manded for taking a police car without consent, being ab-

IRA trial jury sent to hotel

An Old Bailey jury trying four men accused of plotting an

IRA lorry-bomb attack on London was yesterday sent to a

hotel for a fifth night after again failing to reach verdicts. It returns today to continue deliberations. Patrick Kelly,

31, Brian McHugh, 31, James Murphy, 26 and Michael Phillips,

22, have denied conspiring to cause explosions between 1 Jan-

uary and 24 September last year and possessing explosives.

by police, who shot dead a vital member of the team and ar-

rested others, the prosecution has alleged. The dead man,

Diarmuid O'Neill, 27, was allegedly "at the heart of the con-

spiracy" and belonged to a Provisional IRA unit which was

preparing the attack. The gang had access to many tons of

explosives and was using a secure storage unit in north Lon-

Rail firm fails to halt strike

don as a bomb factory, the court heard.

The IRA planned the campaign in London but was foiled

sent from duty and making a false entry in his diary.

the hearing in London earlier this month.

Wheelchair user Ann West, 68, who has liver cancer and

Those travelling by air next Keith Williams, director of safe- signed to relieve the pressure on which has failed to deliver the caused by both the airlines and summer are likely to face ty and operations at National controllers and planned to start. Swanwick operation. lengthy flight delays as Britain's Air Traffic Services (Nats). Mr operations in 1996, will not now open until the end of 1999.

Instead, the forecast 20 per cent increase in UK commercial aircraft movements will have to be handled by juggling the resources of the current system. MPs have questioned why a

million take-offs and landings lantic to New York left on

"Delays are creeping up but late. for air traffic control reasons."

Mr Williams said a record lengthy. Last summer, British number of aircraft had been Airways flights from Gatwick to if the average sickness rate wa handled by UK controllers this Athens suffered average delays year. He added the London cen- of 49 minutes. Meanwhile at tre at West Drayton handled 1.5 Heathrow, trips on Virgin At-

average more than 40 minutes we should stress that of all the Nats announced yesterday reasons that flights are delayed that despite the rise in air trafin Europe, only 19 per cent are fic, the number of near-miss in-

cidents had not increased in the

gested cutting the maximum al-

cisterns from 7.5 litres to six for

tion that a European-type flush-

tire early on a full pension, although this issue is not addressed in today's report. The NAO says that the rate of sick leave among the 27,000 Metropolitan Police officers is higher than the national average and the highest of all metropolitan forces. While praising the Metropolitan Police for making improvements in dealing with sick leave, it expresses concern that new powers to reduce or stop the pay of officers on ex-

tended sick leave is rarely used. In March this year, 312 officers - 1 per cent of the force had been absent for six months or more within the past year, yet only 10 of these had their pay reduced. Just 12 per cent of all cases were due to an injury sustained while on duty. Sir Paul Condon, Commissioner of the the Metropolitan Police, has

On average, police officers took 14.4 working days off sick in the year to April 1997 com-

The Metropolitan Police They were sponsored in said that the force accepted the report's recommendations and and Public Service Union, added that it had already started implementing some of them.

Absence in the Metropolitan Pofour, said: 'It has been a long lice Service, is available on 0171-873 0011. Priced £9.85.



contract to build the new £200m Scottish air traffic control centre has been handed to a consortium headed by the same Compounded by problems past year. company - Lockheed Martin -

The days of the super-powerful power shower could be numhered. Government advisers have suggested that homes which have these extra-strong devices fitted should have water meters installed as well and

water companies agree. Sales of power showers with built in electric pumps have soared recently. Taking a shower is generally reckoned to save water compared to having a bath, but that is not so with the stronger power showers.

The Water Regulations Ad-

visory Committee says those which use over 20 litres a lowed flush volume of lavatory minute should require written approval from the household's all new WCs. But their suggeswater company before installation. That would give the company the option of insisting on fitting a water meter, as happens with swimming pools in most of

Power shower meter call

the country. In less than four minutes, such a shower can consume enough to fill a bath. They flow three times as fast as a non-powered, gravity-fed shower.

The advisors have also sug-

ing mechanism should be allowed as well as the British, siphon-based one has angered the Water Companies Association and UK manufacturers, in the shape of the British Bathroom Council. They claim the siphon-sys-

tem is virtually leak proof, while Euro-style valves often dribble. - Nicholas Schoon

Co Clare, where they provide

their action by Ireland's Civil

which claimed there was "deep-

rooted sex discrimination" at

fight ... and very tough."

their workplace.

Women win record equality payout The Irish Republic's Labour court made the record ruling af- at the Irish Aviation Authority

Court has ordered four female ter declaring that the women station near Shannon Airport, aviation communications officers each to be paid nearly Ir£100,000 (£93,000) backpay in the biggest single award in the history of the country's 10year-old Equal Pay Act.

The government-appointed

were doing the same job as their male employees, but being paid almost Ir£10,000-a-year less. The order that the applicants were entitled to equal pay was backdated to 1989.

The four women are based

DAILY POEM

Not a Love Poem

Sing me a love-song that has nothing to do with love. Write me a line that cuts straight to the bone.

Show me a hean bent back like a blade, white as a knuckle in the heat and the hate of despair.

Throw me your silence like the slow are of a curve-ball. Avoid my eyes, they are terrible as truth.

As a snooker player, Jane Holland ranked 24th in the world before she was banned for "bringing the game into disrepute". Her first collection of poems, The Brief History of a Disrep-

A rail company yesterday failed in a legal bid to halt a strike by some of its workers which threatens "considerable disruption" to services. Wales & West mounted a legal challenge in the High Court, claiming that a ballot by the Rail,

Maritime and Transport union was defective. But the court refused to give the company an injunction, leaving this Friday's strike, in a dispute over hours, still on. The union has also called a 24-hour walkout at South West Trains over a similar row about the working week.

David Weir, Managing Director of Wales & West, said he

was disappointed with the court's decision, adding that the

company will do all it can to minimise disruption on Friday.

utable Woman, is published by Bloodaxe (£6.95).

bach driver

Three good aViglen PC

agreed to review this policy.

pared with 11.3 in 1991/92. communication and weather This costs the police at least services information to transat-£72m a year.

 The Management of Sickness Monica Lyons, one of the



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Airport sex pornographers escape jail term



Children these days may have seen many things, but holidaymakers should not have to run the risk of stumbling across a couple having sex in the airport car park. This was the judge's verdict, reports Clare Gamer.

The cast of the video Public Places Volume 4, caught being filmed having sex on the bonnet of a car in the short-stay car park at Heathrow's Terminal 4, were vesterday conditionally discharged for 18 months.

Georgette Neale, a 23year-old former page three girl, and her producer and costar, Vincent Curran, 35, were spotted naked atop a silver Vauxhall Carlton on a cold November afternoon last year. They were found guilty of outraging public decency by a jury of eight men and four women who reached their decision after watching an eightand-a-half minute recording of what had taken place.

Remarking on the pair's public performance, Judge Fergus Mitchell told Isleworth Crown Court: "What I am here to do is to protect the public from that sort of thing. I suppose children have seen everything these days, but people returning from their holidays hardly expect to find

of the year by readers of a tabloid newspaper, burst into tears when the judge delivered the verdict. She had turned to blue movie-making after her £1.000-a-month glamour work dried up and said she had had no idea that the car park scene was illegal until she heard the

Curran, an unemployed builder with two children, who has a previous conviction for possessing obscene articles with a view to publishing them for gain, was warned by the judge that he faced a "serious" risk of imprisonment.

The actors were being cheered on by a group of builders when car park staff stumbled across the scene and called the police. Officers recovered a professional video camera, sex aids and 14 videos. seven of which were blue movies, from the car.

After a four-day trial, the iury took less than an hour to find Neale and Curran guilty on two counts of outraging public decency.

Curran was delighted with the verdict. "Let's go fly Concorde," he said afterwards. 'I'm so happy, I was expecting to be sent to prison. I bought my bag with me to court today."

Their cameraman, Duncan Wright, 50, of Coventry, and lookout James Wright, 20, of Northampton, who is no relation, were convicted of two counts each of aiding and abetting. All four defendants



Vincent Curran: Was expecting judge to send him to prison

that in a terminal car park." were ordered to contribute to Neale, of Waltham Abbey, the Crown's £1,866 prosecu-Georgette Neale: Cried as she heard verdict Photographs: Photonews Essex, who was voted stripper tion bill.

Coach driver denies blame for children's deaths in Alps crash

wrong with his driving".

A coach driver whose bus crashed in the ately and schoolmates Robert Boardman Alps, killing three children and injuring 25, denied in a French court yesterday that he was to blame for the accident. Jim Shaw, 43, told the Tribunal de Grande Instance in Albertville, in the Savoy region near Mont Blanc, that he could not explain why his coach plunged from a narrow mountain

road into a 70ft ravine on 7 July. Nicola Moore, 16, was killed immedi-

and Keith Ridding, both 14, died later in hospital. Other pupils suffered serious injuries, including broken vertebrae, and Mr Shaw broke several ribs.

Mr Shaw, from Droyslden, Manchester. said he had been unable to drive a coach since the accident and had given up his job.

Monique Hugo, for the presecution, said he was to blame for the crash and de-

manded a two month suspended prison sentence and fines totalling FF11,000 (£1,155). But Marie Christine Cartilier, for the defence, said there was "not the slightest thing

Ms Hugo said that Mr Shaw was professionally responsible for the safety of the 19 pupils of St James's Church of England School. Bolton, and the seven adults on board the coach. Mr Shaw, who was

untary wounding and failure to control his vehicle, said: "As far as I am concerned, I was driving that vehicle safely.

"To this day I cannot say why the accident happened. The front wheel went off the road and I couldn't get it back on. I re-

but it just wouldn't go." Parents of the victims travelled to Al-

charged with involuntary homicide, invol-bertville to attend yesterday's trial and to out by you without apparent motive and lay flowers at the scene of the crash. Their without apparent remorse. You, in my lawyer said they recognised the extent of view, are a dangerous young man and you Mr Shaw's suffering and were making no present a considerable risk to the public in demands for a stiff sentence or for com- the future. These are matters which will have pensation from him. Under French law, Mr to be reflected in the advice I will have to Shaw did not have to enter a plea of guilty give to the Secretary of State." member trying to steer back onto the road, or not guilty. The tribunal's verdict will be

delivered on 5 January.

Killer told police of murder plot

A convicted paedophile who killed a man in his home while an undercover police team kept surveillance outside was jailed for life

A judge at Manchester Crown Court told Mikhail Gallatinov. 23, who had been targeted by a police operation shortly after being released from jail, that he was a dangerous man who presented a risk to the public. The jury took just an hour to convict Gallatinov of Moston, Manchester, of murder, rejecting his plea of diminished responsibility.

Jurors were told that during a week-long trial that Adrian Kaminsky. 28, was strangled by Gallatinov in his terraced house because of a grudge he held over a previous homosexual encounter.

Gallatinov had been secretly videotaped telling an undercover police officer who befriended him how he was going to

carry out a killing. His plans involved driving his victim across the Pennines to Hull, and after the murder cutting off the hands and burning

the body to prevent identification. But Gallatinov thwarted police efforts to prevent a murder by strangling his victim the day before he had told the under-

cover officer he was going to do so. Police only discovered the killing had already been carried out when they stopped Gallatinov's car on the outskirts of Hull in November last year and found Mr Kaminsky's near-naked body in the boot. Gallatinov had even taken photographs of the dead body just after the murder using a cam-

era lent to him by police. In two taped meetings with the undercover officer - known only as "Steve" - on the day of the murder, Gallatinov was seen by the jury laughing as he described how he was going to lure his victim to an isolated spot near Hull and murder him.

Police did not know the identity of the intended victim until they discovered Mr Kaminsky's body in the boot.

Jailing Gallatinov, the Recorder of Manchester, Judge Rhys Davies QC, told him: "This is a case in which there has been a completely cold-blooded killing carried

Police later defended their operation and said there was nothing they could have done - Kate Watson-Smyth to prevent the killing taking place.

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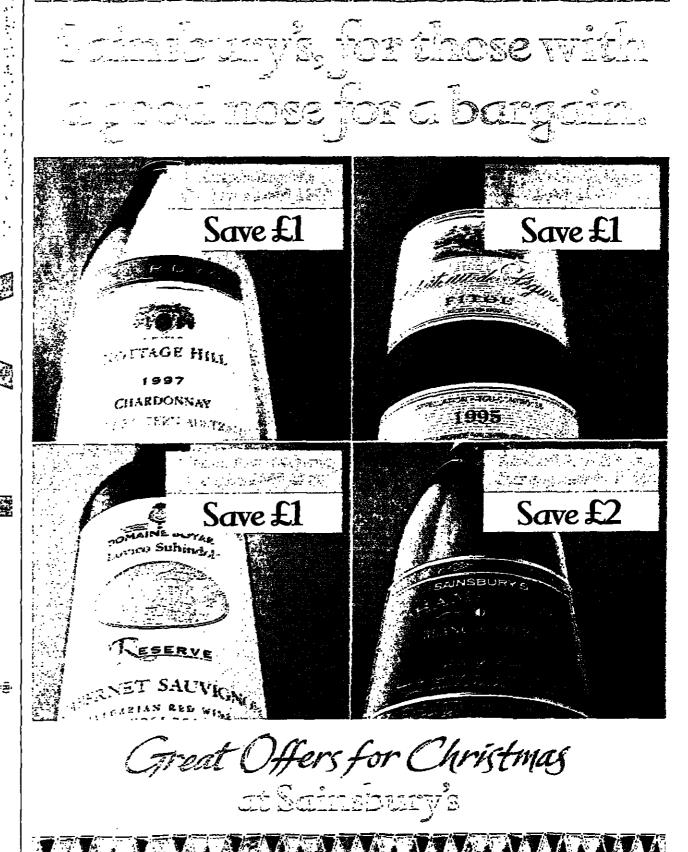
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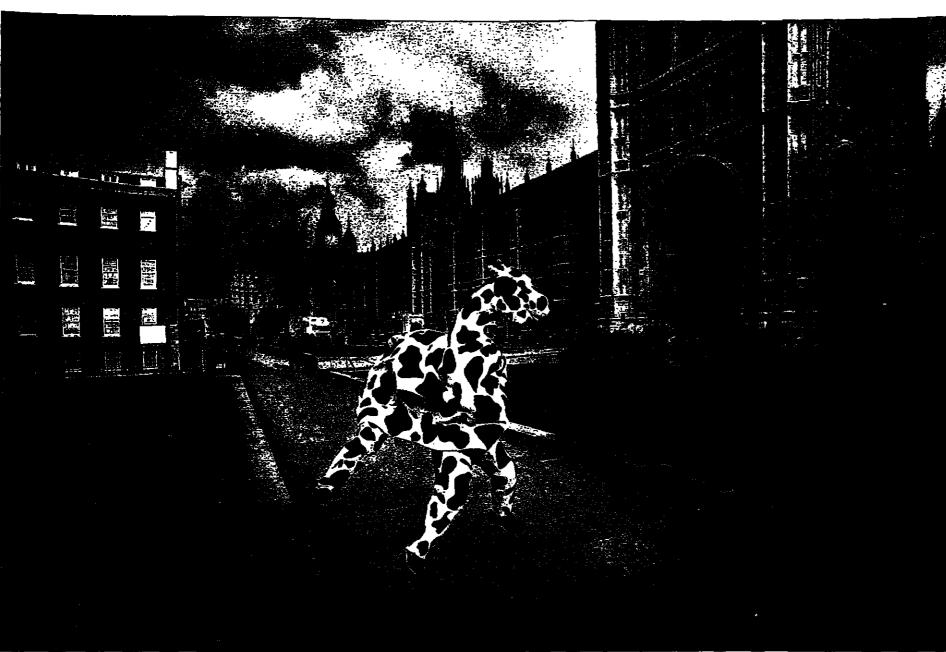
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Bone of contention: A pantomime cow outside the Houses of Parliament yesterday as farmers and meat traders protested over the new beef restriction Photograph: Brian Harris

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Meat traders march in battle to save beef-on-the-bone

Farmers and butchers were on the march in the capital yesterday in a last-ditch defence of beef-on-the-bone. Kim Sengupta witnesses their anger and frustration, and also discovers some intriguing plans to beat the ban.

There was no shortage of op-

ster and its environs were awash the House of Commons and Downing Street by farmers and butchers on the last day before es by up to 300 per cent. the ban. It was meant to highlight what is seen as an unnecreaction by the Government.

portunities for sampling beef- content simply to take part in give out too much detail about He stated: "I would be prepared

on-the-bone in the centre of such public protests. It is their their businesses, as the regula-London yesterday. Westmin- duty, they believe, to ensure tions published last night that their customers continue to showed they could face unlimwith beef-on-the-bone of all have the opportunity to buy ited fines or up to two years in shapes and sizes, along with the beef-on-the-bone if they want men who sell them. Steaks, to. The evidence of the demand, ribs, and roasts were carried to they say, is plain to see. Sales of Essex, said: "My punters know beef-on-the-bone have shot up where I am, that's all that matin the last weeks, in some cas-

A few butchers claimed they would continue to sell the ribs essary and damaging knee-jerk and T-bone steaks whatever north London, was also willing the law says. Perhaps under- to flout what he sees as an "un-But some butchers are not standably, they did not want to

fines - but it's my father's shop and I don't think he would prison for selling illegal beef. want to take the risk." Steve, who owns two shops in Some of his colleagues, how-

ters. They will not be doing anythan evasion. Paul Hambling, thing illegal by buying." from Rickmansworth, Hert-Richard Askew, whose famfordshire, just happen to be ily owns Askew's Butchers in "storing" for buyers. He said: "A lot of my customers have placed bulk orders for meat-on-thedemocratic, dictatorial law". bone and paid for them. I am not selling anything after the

> ing after pre-paid bulk orders. Meat trader George Faulkner was thinking of revenues from another direction. "How do you think a 'beef-on-thebone weekend' would go down? Trips to Dublin or Paris perhaps." he mused. "But we are going to get a lot of illegal traf-

Poges, in Buckinghamshire, confirmed that he too is look-

ever, believe they have found a

method of avoidance rather

to sell - one has to balance the fic. I know people are planning cost of losing customers with the to sell it door-to-door from back of vans just like duty-free booze from the Continent."

Last night, ministers hit back at such dissenters by publishing details of how the ban would work. Veal killed at under six months old would be exempt, they said. However, it was still not clear who would remove, store or dispose of the newlyillicit beef bones. The butchers delivered a

six-ribbed Scottish joint to the 1,200,000 to one chance of getting CJD from eating beef-onthe-bone," said the MP. "I have more chances of being hit by an object dropped from the sky."

At that, a lone vegetarian heckled: "Even Shakespeare knew the danger of eating excessive red meat.In Twelfth Night he had Andrew Aguecheek saying 'I am a great eater of beef, and I believe it harms my wit'."

Cunningham cuts up rough with EU over meat controls

sale of continental beef which stringent health and hygiene ister, Jack Cunningham, told his EU colleagues last night.

In a furious outburst he acments of "prevaricating, obfuscating and delaying" because they did not want to enforce a Europe-wide ban on offal, brain and other animal parts thought to carry the highest concentration of BSE inments from some member-Austria, which claim not to their herds.

Mr Cunningham announced his move in Brussels after the 14 other EU governments reperinary Committee outvoted Britain to put off for three quirements. months a Europe-wide extension of British-style rules reluctantly agreed last July.

"I am not prepared to delay this or to countenance any further delay," said Mr Cunningham, adding that "beef can as it has been subjected to the same stringent safeguards as required in Britain".

risk material follows protests from the US over over trade in beef by-products, including gelatine used in pharmaceutical drugs, but also to allow more time for research into the potential health risk from lamb, which independent scientists warned about last week.

* Eight of the fifteen membersimply storing for them. How House of Commons where they states also claim their herds are ingly or unknowingly" misconcan I be breaking the law if I am were met by Tory Euro-sceptic BSE-free and that the measures strued the outcome of talks with William Cash. "There is are therefore superfluous but argument as irrelevant in a single European market.

He said there was no guarantee that meat wholesaled in one member-state had not in fact come from a neighbouring country's herd. "My first loyalties and duties lie with safe-British people," Mr Cunningham said, adding that penalties

Britain will unilaterally ban the for breach of the rules would be "significant". Mr Cunningham has not been subjected to the said he was unconcerned by whether or not his unilateral controls already in force in UK measure is legal under EU abattoirs, the agriculture min-rules. I am not going to get into prevaricating discussions with them; I am just going to do it."

schools

and be diverted into

National State Schools HERIESTER IT CHAPES OF per the system ed last night. Frank Selfskey note specific mired to racical duries in a delayed

green Paper an the Magic shares with the same

The practical impact of the cused other European govern- ban is likely to be limited, raising suspicions in Brussels that on a day when British farmers took to the streets of London. it is aimed more at diverting public criticism away from the Government and back to Europe. Much of the beef exportfectivity. He dismissed as ed to the UK comes from "completely fraudulent" argu- Ireland and Mr Cunningham acknowledged that risk materstates such as Germany or ial is already removed there under regulations in force since need additional precautions last February. The French too because BSE is unknown in have gone ahead with the systematic removal of all specified risk material.

Dutch and German suppliers, however, would be hit if resented on the Standing Vet- British supermarkets cancelled contracts because of the new re-

Mr Cunningham's department made clear the measure did not amount to a trade ban in the strict sense, because meat could be imported into the UK as long as the offending matter was removed before it come in to the country as long went on sale. In practice however this would heap costs on continental suppliers, as they would have to upgrade abattoirs Europe's delay in banning to meet the British standards.

Mr Cunningham also accused farm leaders of conveying the wrong impression about the prospect of an early relaxation of the ban on British beef. Dampening expectations for any breakthrough when the European Commission meets to discuss the situation today, he said the NFU "may have know-EU commissioner Emma Boni-

He was still "perfectly content" to allow lamb on the bone to continue to be sold. All the popular cuts, such as rack, cutlets or leg were completely safe, he said. Scientists advising the Government on BSE have advised additional precautions guarding the health of the for meat from sheep older than 12 months.

Katherine Butler, Brussels

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Parkinson warned against swing to **Euro-scepticism**

Kenneth Clarke and Michael Heseltine last night warned the Tory Party chairman, Lord Parkinson, to avoid a swing to the Euro-sceptic right by the Opposition, reports Colin Brown, Chief Political Correspondent.

Lord Parkinson sought to reassure the high-powered delegation of pro-European MPs that they would still have a voice inside the Tory Party, in spite of the hard-line policy against the single European currency adopted by William Hague.

"Cecil said we were still a broad church, and we had a role to play," said one Tory MP who was at the meeting at Conservative Central Office.

The MPs, members of the Positive European Group. warned against using new electoral rules to pack the places for Conservatives at the European Parliament with Euro-sceptics after elections in 1999. The party chairman is understood to have suggested that the candidates may be chosen by an extension of one-member one-vote demo-

cracy inside the Tory Party. Lord Parkinson also told the MPs that he believed that Tony Blair would call the general election a year early. in 2001. "He said that Margaret [Thatcher] had always got to the end of the fourth year of a Parliament and started planning the election to stop being boxed in. That is what he said Blair would do."

Lord Parkinson told the former Cabinet ministers that the five tests set by the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, for Britain's entry to the single currency made it less likely that Britain could join. He said it was therefore less likely that Europe should be an issue at the next election.

However, his remarks will not satisfy the Euro-sceptic majority of Tory MPs at Westminster who believe fighting the next election on a platform to "save the pound" would be a potent weapon against Mr Blair.

The pro-European group used the meeting to stake out their position, having forced the leadership into compromises over the way the Opposition voted on the ratification of Mr Blair's negotiations at his first European summit in Amsterdam. The meeting followed a warning last week by John Major to Mr Hague against a lurch to the right.

The former Prime Minister has told friends that he has regained his appetite for politics. "He could become another Alec Douglas Home," said one friend, referring to the former Tory prime minister who went on to become foreign secretary.

Mr Hague yesterday told the Conservative Friends of Israel in London that it was "painful to see my party described as greedy, selfish and lacking in compassion ... we are proud of our record."

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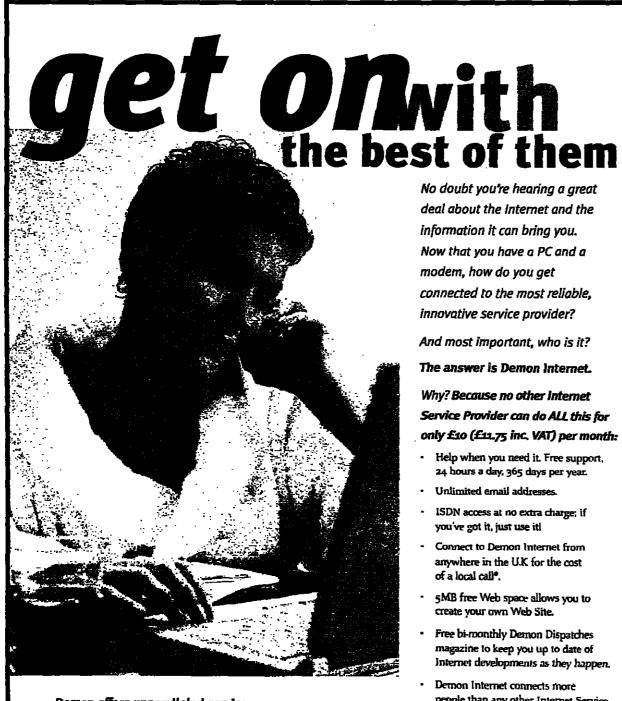
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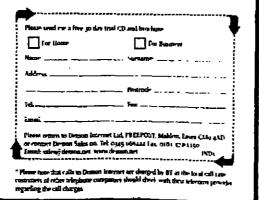
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9/POLITICS

Schools and hospitals could cash in on benefit cuts

Cuts in Britain's benefit bill will be diverted into hospitals and schools, the minister in charge of reforming the system said last night. Frank Field's keynote speech pointed to radical changes in a delayed Green Paper on the benefit system, writes

Ministers yesterday again reconsidering compelling lone nerships or even by voluntary mothers to take jobs under the Welfare to Work scheme.

Fran Abrams.

Harriet Harman, the Secrety, faced new criticism from Labour backbenchers in the set out the principles for the

Asked whether single moth- help we can get." ers would be forced into jobs, she replied: "Compulsion is ing disability benefits, but did say that "no one is even talking those who need them – disabled or pensioners. Of course we mustn't do that". The Government would honour its pledge to maintain the old-age pension, she said.

However, Mr Field, minister for welfare reform, suggested that money could be diverted from benefits into health and the amount spent each year on people went out to work.

every year" through fraud, and spending review".

that this could not go on. "If savings are made from the social security budget - and by moving people into work we will reduce the financial load - we will be releasing resources for education and health," he said.

But while the aim was to divert resources to other areas, Britain should not aim for a " bargain-basement system" like the one in the United States, where welfare had become a dirty word because it was seen as only being for the poor.

He also suggested that more benefits could be delivered fused to say whether they were through public-private partorganisations. Friendly societies, trades unions and charities could administer benefits, tary of State for Social Securi- bringing them closer to those who received them, he said.

He repeated that there Commons just hours before would be "hard choices" to be her colleague Frank Field made and added: "I am under no illusions that this is a long game, or that we need all the

A spokesman for the Department of Social Security not the issue." She also failed confirmed last night that Mr to rule out means testing or tax- Field's lecture on the principles that should govern welfare reform gave pointers to a forthabout taking away benefits off coming Green Paper on the subject. It had been due by the end of the year, but is now expected some time in January or February.

There was also confirmation last night that social security ministers and environment ministers were working on a scheme that could dramatically reduce education. In a lecture organ- housing benefits. Ms Harman ised by Prospect magazine, he told Dale Campbell-Savours, added that the benefits bill - Labour MP for Worthington currently £100bn per year and and a strong advocate of rerising fast - could be cut if more forms to pin levels of rent paid to landlords, housing associa-He also said that the current tions and local authorities, that system was "leaking billions of housing benefits were "very pounds to the wrong people much part of the comprehensive



Frank Field: Billions of pounds 'leaking to the wrong people every year' through fraud must be stopped

Totting up bill for illness and disability

How many people get it? 4.3 What if I can't work? You million get the general sickness and disability benefits. On top of that some people can claim disability premium on top of income support.

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How much does it cost? The prices) to £23.5bn. It is now one-quarter of the Social Security Budget.

What types of benefit are there? The main benefits are Incapacity benefits (a means What if I haven't paid unable to work), Disability Disablement Allowance, Invalid Care Allowance, industrial injuries allowance. war pensions.

Who gets what? 1.9 million get Disability Living Aldwance, which is split into two components: mobility (£13.50-£34.60 per week) and care (£13.50-£49.50).

How about paying for care? Attendance Allowance is a tax-free benefit for help with care ranging from £32.40 to £48.50.

What if I'm disabled through work? You are eligible for Industrial Injuries Benefit. claimed by a quarter of a million people.

Who pays? The Government, if there is no blame attached to the company for your dis-

may be eligible for Incapacity Benefit -24 million get it. Short-term is £47.10 a week, long-term £55.70. To get this benefit people have to take the All Work Test - which involves a doctor assessing your disability bill has trebled ability to work, looking at your since the early 1980s from ability to walk, sit, lift and £4.1bn (£7bn in today's stand in addition to any injuries or ailments you may have. The scoring system means anyone with 15 points or more on a 0-30 scale remains in benefit.

tested benefit for short-/ enough National Insurance long-term people who are to qualify for incapacity benefit? You get Severe Dis-Living Allowance, Atten- ablement Allowance, which dance Allowance, Severe is tax free. Again you have to take the All Work Test.

> What if I am working? 12.500 get Disability Working Allowance - those working for low wages or short hours get £49.55 single £77.55 for a cou-

> Why has the bill gone up so much? A combination of

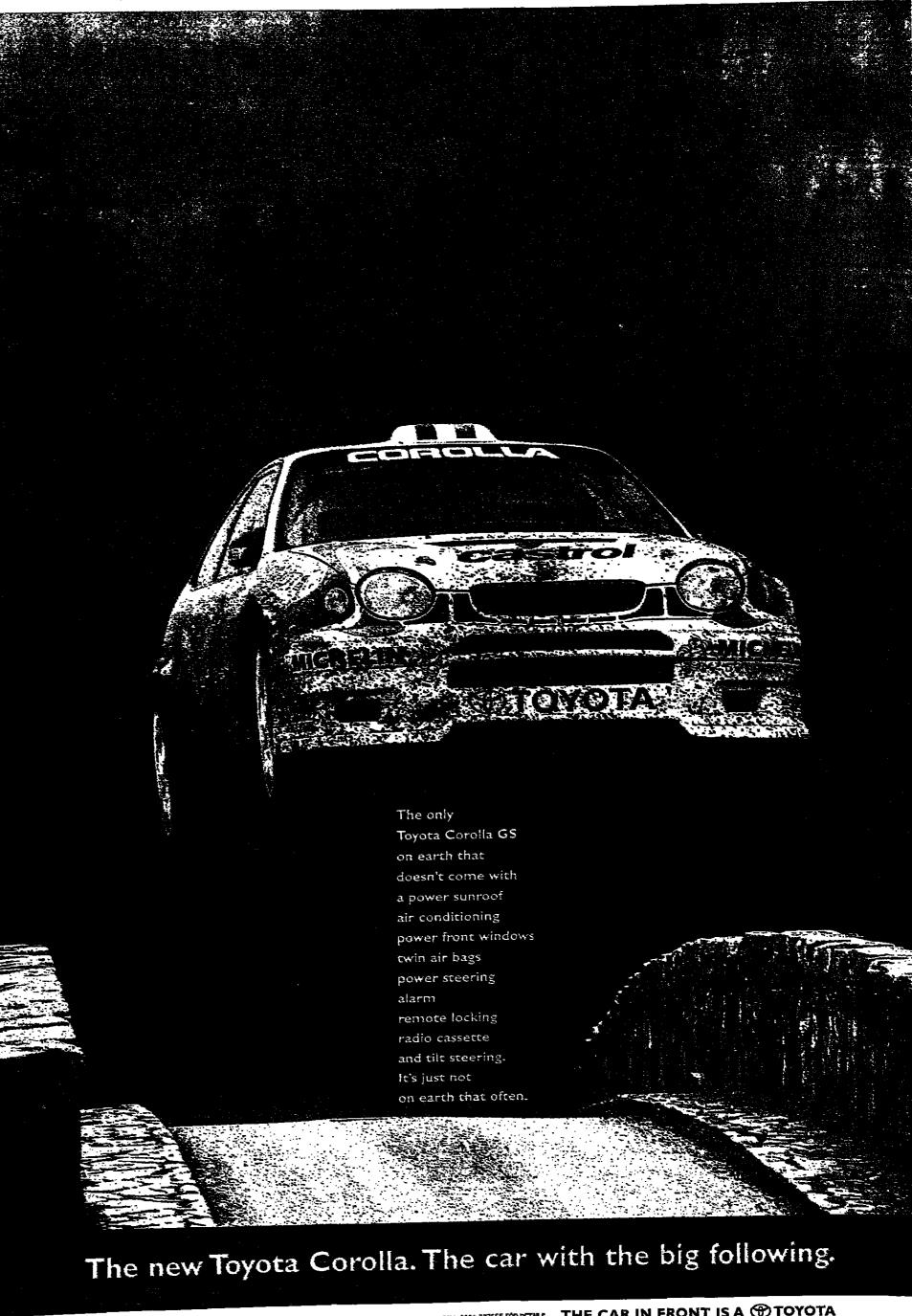
factors:

1. A push in the early 1990s to alert people that they could claim such benefits. 2. An ageing population needs more care.

3. There were suggestions that some people may have been shunted on to incapacity benefit rather than stay on the unemployment count. and that some GPs were sympathetic to putting people on benefit. Incapacity Benefit, with its All Work Test, was introduced in April 1995 to try to stop this.



Harriet Harman: Pressed again in the Commons on whether single mothers would be forced to work under benefits reform, she replied: 'Compulsion is not the issue' Photograph: Brian Harris



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French officers accused of extreme pro-Serb bias

France said yesterday that it was shocked to be accused of harbouring war criminals in Bosnia. But John Lichfield in Paris says the newspaper 'Le Monde' has reported extreme pro-Serb sentiments among French officers in the country.

"Scandalous", "unspeakable", "profoundly shocking". The French foreign ministry is expert at hinting its displeasure but all President Bill Clinton is to make a flying diplomatic language went out of the window yesterday.

The foreign minister. Hubert Védrine, furiously protested in person to Louise Arbour, the chief prosecutor of the international war crimes tribunals in The Hague. morale-booster for the troops, but as a It was Ms Arbour, a French-Canadian judge, who accused France at the weekend of, in effect, providing a safe haven for indicted Serb war criminals in the south-east part of Bosnia which is patrolled by French troops to remain in Bosnia expires at the

tify before the Bosnian, and Rwandan, war crimes tribunals.

After the meeting vesterday afternoon. had told Ms Arbour that he was "deeply shocked" by these "scandalous allegations". He said France would co-operate had itself helped to create. with the international tribunals "in its own

refusing to allow its military officers to tes- bunals to be turned into a media circus in which witnesses became indistinguishable from the accused.

Ms Arbour, by all accounts, stood her the ministry spokeswoman said Mr Vedrine ground. She told Mr Vedrine that France among senior French officers serving in was failing in its duty to co-operate with the Bosnia. formal international inquiries which it

In the meantime, further fuel was

tial newspaper Le Monde (the first to carry Ms Arbour's allegations). The newspaper's correspondent in Sarajevo reported widespread pro-Serb sentiment

the Serbs had been "sacrificed" by the Day-

Christian Lecomte quoted one colonel claimed that Serbian schoolgirls in Sara-

troops. She protested that France alone was refusing to allow its military officers to tas.

way". But it would refuse to allow the tripoured on the controversy by the influention accords of November 1995 which endly false allegation, peddled by extremist ed the Bosnian civil war. The re-arming of the Muslims by the United States would lead to an "Islamic resurgence in the region", he said, which would "destabilise

To justify his remarks, the officer at the French headquarters as saying that jevo were being forced to wear Islamic head scarves. This, Le Monde said, was a total-

In interviews with the French press, Ms Arbour claimed that most of the indicted-Serb war criminals sought by the Hague tribunal - and all the most important ones -

were living in impunity in the French sector of Bosnia. The French defence ministry retorted yesterday that there were only "six to eight" wanted people in the French zone, compared to 10 in the US sector and "nearly 25 in the British sector". Le Monde complained that these figures were out of date; there had been a movement of indicted Serbs into the French zone since the arrest amps
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Prijedor last July The newspaper said that indicted Serbs were "parading" through Foca, in eastern Bosnia, one of the principal towns in the French zone. They included Dragan Gagovic and Janko Janjic, two of the Bosnian Serb officials accused of organising the systematic rape of Muslim women in 1992.

of one Serb and the killing of another by

British troops in the north-western town of

CLINTON TO VISIT TROOPS AT CHRISTMAS AS BATTLE WITH CONGRESS LOOMS

pre-Christmas visit to United States troops serving with the Nato-led contingent in Bosnia. The visit, likely to take place next weekend and take in Tuzla and Sarajevo, is seen not just as a seasonal sign of the administration's continuing commitment to maintaining a US military

presence in former Yugoslavia. The congressional mandate for the

end of June and Congress, with a Republican majority in both houses, a distinctly isolationist tinge and elections due next year, is expected to contest any proposal that the troops should stay longer.

Administration officials say that Mr Clinton's visit will be his opening gambit in the campaign to keep US troops in place. They say he will use his trip to warn that progress made since the Dayton accords were signed two years ago is insufficient to warrant the withdrawal of US troops by the

June deadline. While Britain and other European have largely accepted the argument for remaining, they also recognise that it is unrealistic for them to stay without the Americans. The US provides satellite reconnaissance, transport helicopters and other equipment that Europe lacks but are considered essential to the operations of the Nato-led Stabilisation Force (S-For).

While Mr Clinton has publicly acknowledged that US troops will probably have to stay in Bosnia beyond the June

deadline, divisions have emerged between members of his administration. The Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, seems more inclined to argue for a continued US role in Bosnia than the Defense Secretary, William Cohen although one interpretation is that Mr Cohen is simply holding out for more money and better terms for the cashstrapped military than objecting in principle to the extension of involvement.

- Mary Dejevsky, Washington

Guyana breaks tradition

Voters in Guyana went to the polls yesterday, with a white woman born in the United States tipped to emerge as the country's president.
In South America's only

English-speaking nation, politics has little to do with ideology and a lot to do with ethnic origins. The country is split between immigrants from the Indian sub-continent and those of African origin, descendants of those brought over in British colonial days. Strange, then, that the winner of the presidential ballot is likely to be an elderly Jewish woman from Chicago.

Janet Jagan, 76, an avowed but mellowed Marxist, seems set for the presidential palace as candidate of the ruling People's Progressive Party (PPP). In fact, she has not been out of the palace for long because she is the widow of Cheddi Jagan. the PPP's long-time leader who died in office in March this year.

Mrs Jagan has been a citizen of Guyana, known as British pendent in 1966, for three decades. She met her husband in the US during the Second World War when he was a dental student. That makes her something of an honorary member of the Indian community. which the PPP, founded by Mr Jagan, traditionally represents.

Polls suggest that she will defeat Desmond Hoyte, 68, the candidate of the opposition People's National Congress (PNC), whose powerbase is the

community of African descent. Mrs Jagan appears to have been put forward to unite the PPP under her busband's name, and it is believed that after winning the election she could hand over to a younger successor, widely tipped to be Barrath Jagdeo, now finance minister.



A Thai woman throws holy water onto skulls and bones to be burned in the world's largest mass cremation at a temple in Samut Sakorn province. Tons of bones and 21,347 skulls are to be cremated this week to mark the end of urban burials in Bangkok. The unclaimed remains were taken from a Chinese cemetery Photograph: Reuters

Airliner crashes in Sharjah

An airliner with 86 people on board crashed vesterday near

an airport in the United Arab Emirates. There was no word

on survivors. The Tu-154 was en route from Tajikistan to Shar-

jah, UAE. Emergency teams were en route to the crash site.

cal reports say the plane went down in a desert outside the

The plane was carrying 77 passengers and nine crew. Lo-

Castro gets into the festive spirit

ficial holiday this year and share here from 21 to 25 January an Cuba's limited resources to ensure the success of the Pope's gestore." visit to the Communist country.

broadcast on Sunday night on at, suble-free visit - the first by national television. Mr Castro a pupe to the island. was unusually warm in his com-

President Fidel Castro is offer- ments about the Church and the ing to declare Christmas an of- Pope, calling John Paul's visit "honour for Cuba, and a valiant

was the strongest sign of During a three-hour speech M. Castro's resolve to ensure

airport of Sharjah, one of the seven emirates. — AP, Dubai Carlos lawyers pull out

Three lawyers representing Hich Ramirez Sanchez, known as Carlos the Jackal, withdrew from his trial in Paris yesterday. The manoeuvre seemed to be part of a strategy to reduce the trial to a farce. The presiding judge ordered the principle defence lawyer. Isabelle Coutant-Peyre, to continue in the case and made a formal complaint to the Paris bar when she refused. The president of the bar also ordered her to resume her duties but she again declined. Ms Coutant-Peyre said she was withdrawing because the court had delayed judgement on her complaint that key witnesses were being withheld from the trial. The hearing continued without the three lawyers.

Ramirez Sanchez is accused of the murder of two French secret service agents and a Lebanese informer in Paris in June — John Lichfield, Paris

Tsar's bones can be moved

Russia's Supreme Court yesterday overturned a ban by a regional court on transferring to Moscow the remains of the country's last tsar and his family, who were murdered by Bolsheviks in 1918. The decision opens the way for a final round of tests to establish the bones' authenticity. Last month the Sverdlovsk regional court blocked the transfer of the bones from the Ural city of Yekaterinburg. Shortly afterwards the court allowed some of the bones to be transferred to the cap-- Reuters, Moscow

Disabled girls sterilised

A report released yesterday by the government's human rights agency said more than 1,000 girls with learning difficulties had been illegally sterilised in the last five years. In 1992, a High Court decision made sterilisation illegal if it was not medically required, unless permission was granted by a court or tribunal. The report, commissioned by the federal Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, showed permission had been granted 17 times since 1992 for women to be sterilised. However, the commission said figures showed at least 1.045 girls have been sterilised over that period.

Party split on Australia's right

Australia's One Nation party, led by Pauline Hanson who triggered a row about race, is in turmoil after the launch of a breakaway party, a former Han-

son supporter said yesterday. Concerns about the party's direction and ultra-right wing policies prompted the formation of the new Australian One Nation Party, which was launched in New South Wales last Sunday.

Peter Archer, one of the rebel party's founding members, said that Ms Hanson faced a "very bleak" future. "I think One Nation will eventually fizzle," he told Australian Broadcasting Corporation radio yesterday. " ... the breakaway [party] may have accelerated that process but ... I think the current Pauline Hanson's One Nation would have been in total

turmoil before the next election." Mr Archer, who has been accused in parliament of having links with the right-wing League of Rights group, said former supporters of Ms Hanson had

become concerned about the power of the party's core leaders. "It's very dictatorial ... If you do express any concerns or have any ideas, you're either fobbed off or smeared, or kicked out of the party, or both," he said.

Ms Hanson, elected to parliament 21 months ago, shot to prominence last year when she warned that Australia was in danger of being swamped by Asians and criticised Aboriginal welfare. But her party's popularity has steadily to about 3 per izenship, was a harsh critic of the cent from more than 10 per cent after its launch last April — Reuters, Canberra

Lau in passport battle

Emily Lau, one of Hong Kong's most outspoken politicians, is being forced to give up her British passport so that she can contest next May's legislative council elections. She had been planning to challenge the legality of the ban on foreign passport holders standing for seats in the geographic constituencies, but said yesterday that time was running out for such a challenge.

Under Hong Kong's new election laws, foreign passport holders will be allowed to stand in certain so-called functional constituencies, where seats are filled by voters from occupational groups. Mrs Lau described this as "very arbitrary and very unfair".

Many middle-class people in Hong Kong hold foreign passports, including a high percentage of those who sat in the last elected legislature which was dissolved when China resumed sovereignty over Hong Kong in July. Under new rules, a maximum of 20 per cent of members will be allowed to hold foreign passports.

Mrs Lau, a former journalist, has lived in Britain where she worked for the BBC. When she returned to Hong Kong, she quickly established a reputation as one of the most daunting interrogators of government officials. She was one of the few reporters to have taken Margaret Thatcher, the former prime minister, by surprise after the signing of the 1984 agreement for Hong Kong's reversal to Chinese rule. At a memorable press conference, she asked Mrs Thatcher how she felt about delivering Hong Kong's people into the hands of Communist rule. The question received a blustery response.

Mrs Lau is a founder member of the Frontier Party. She received a record number of votes in the last elections for the legislature, and was one of the council's most popular and aggressive members.

Although the supporters of the new regime tend to label all its opponents as being "pro-British", they have found it hard to pin this label on Emily Lau who, despite her British citoutgoing regime.

– Stebhen Vines



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Militias raid camps as new offensive starts in the killing fields

The latest massacre in Rwanda has further dashed hopes for peace after the 1994 genocide. Amelia French in Kigali reports on how remnants of the militias which carried out the genocide are stepping up their campaign of violence.

Everyone thought is was likely to happen again and it did.
Last week, suspected Rwandan Hutu militiamen attacked a UN camp for Tutsi refugees from Congo-Zaire and massacred many of the inhabitants.

It was the second attack in only four months on the camp at Mudende, situated in one of the most violent areas of northwestern Rwanda. In August, more than 130 refugees were killed.

This time, the official deathtoll was about 270, though survivors say the true figure was much higher.

The Rwandan army, which counted the bodies along with UN officials, denies this. But the hideous results were there for all to see: charred bodies, babies hacked to death, blood-soaked clothes strewn around, and burnt-out tents.

The regional military chief,
Col Kayumba Nyamwasa, said
he had suspended the army
commander guarding the
camp for failing to respond
when attackers set about the



camp with guns, grenades and machetes at around midnight.

Up to 200 tents were

burned. "I looked out of my window and saw flames going right up into the sky." one resident said.

Rwandan officials and the UN are trying to work out what is to be done with more than 16.000 survivors of the carnage, most of whom have fled to a nearby temporary camp.

This was the latest attack in an esculating campaign of violence in north-west Rwanda by Hutu militiamen, apparently still committed to the agenda of Tutsi extermination that the world witnessed three years ago.

The Rwandan authorities say the militiamen are the remnants of the former government army and their militia allies who carried out the genocide of 1994, in which an estimated 800,000 Tutsis and Hutu opponents of the regime were killed.

They say most of the militiamen returned to Rwanda during the final repatriation of refugees who fled to Zaire and elsewhere in 1994, when the Tutsi-dominated Rwandese Patriotic Front took power. Certainly, the violence has increased dramatically following the last mass repatriation of Hutu refugees over the past year.

"We are not fighting a war, we are fighting genocide," Col Kayumba said the day after the attack, as he stood beside the



A woman and her children at a temporary refugee camp which was set up to protect those who survived the massacre at Mudende, in which at least 270 people died. It was the latest attack in an escalating campaign of violence in north-west Rwanda by Hutu militiamen, apparently still committed to the agenda of Tutsi extermination that the world witnessed three years ago. Photograph: Corinne Dufka/Reuters

bodies of women and children laid out for burial at the camp at Mudende.

The Rwandan government has been accused of dragging its feet over the repatriation of Tutsi refugees to Congo-Zaire. It has been suggested that if they were sent back over the border, the Tutsi minority in the north-west of Rwanda would feel even more vulnerable.

The ethnic divide in the north-west between the Hutus and Tutsis is becoming increasingly bitter. The methods which are used by the militiamen include attacking and killing Tutsi civilians, storming jails to release genocide suspects, killing officials, both Tutsi and Hutus believed to be co-operating with the army, burning local administration buildings and ambushing passenger and military vehicles.

The army says that after each attack, the militiamen melt back into the local population, which clearly supports them. Often, the local Hutu population flees immediately after an attack, fearing retribution at the hands of the army. Reports from the northwest speak of large numbers of Hutu civilians being killed in the army's counter-insurgency operations. Tutsi civilians are also reported to be carrying out reprisal killings of Hutus from

The army mostly denies all this and says such reports are put out by supporters of the militiamen. Given the security situation in the region, diplomats, human-rights monitors, members of international organisations and journalists have been advised to travel only with military escorts. This makes independent information hard to come by.

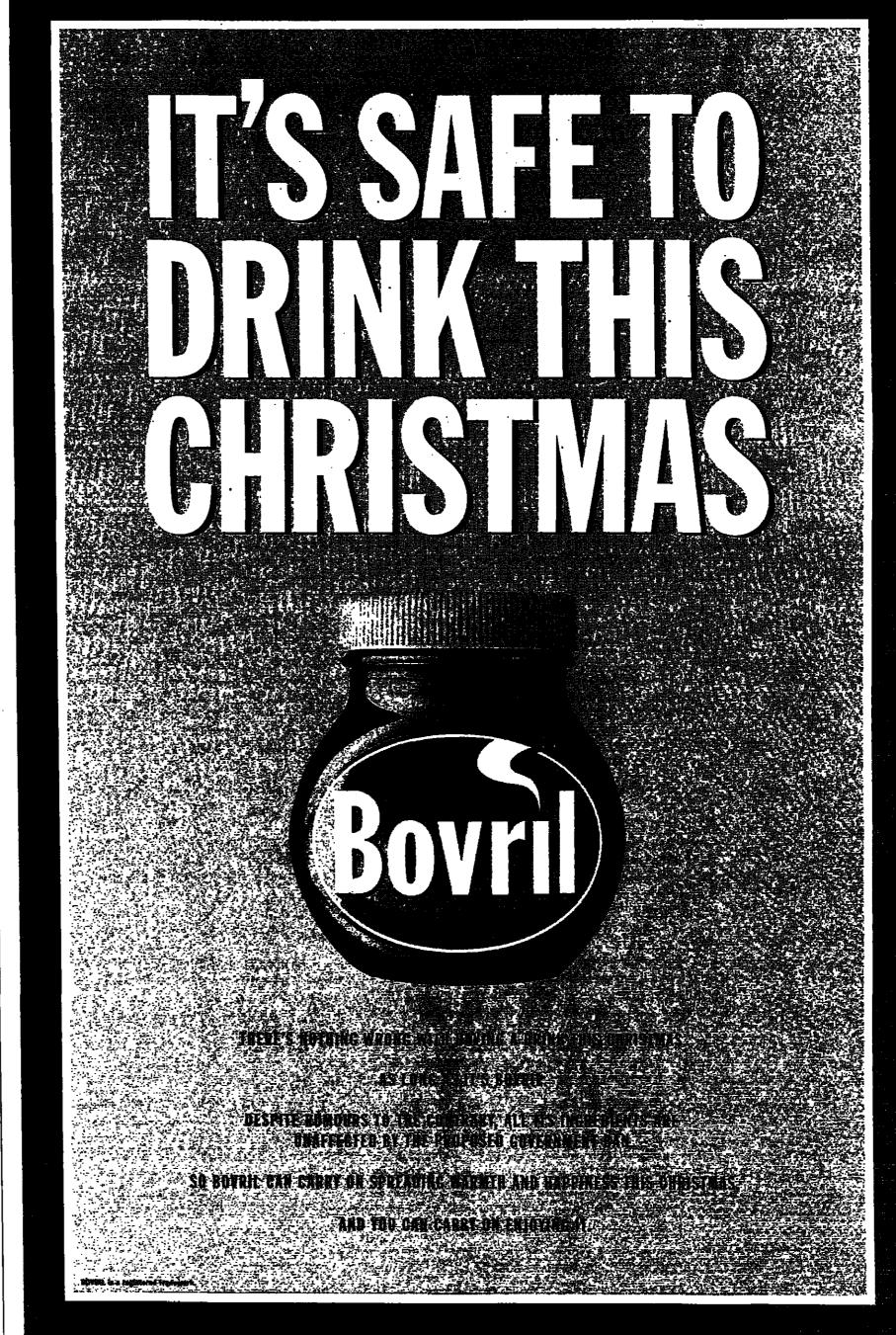
The Rwandan authorities are increasingly maintaining that there is no such thing as innocent bystanders amongst the Hutus of the north-west, which is traditionally the heartland of Hutu extremism. Undoubtedly, the assumption of guilt and the fear of being killed during military operations is pushing an increasing number of young men into the bush.

Recently, local people have begun crossing the border into neighbouring Congo-Zuire in flight from the fighting. But they are usually rounded up and pushed back into Rwanda by the Congolese authorities.

Col Kayumba believes that his forces are fighting an estimated 15,000 militiamen in the north-west. He says the rebels have no political or economic agenda and are intent only on killing the Tutsis or chasing them out of the country. "Tutsis, go back to your place of origin or accept to die," read a message scrawled in blue chalk on a well close to Mudende camp.

The Rwandan government yesterday issued a statement describing the activities of the Hutu militiamen as genocide and said this was the direct responsibility of the international community, which should deal with the situation in that context, although the government made clear it could deal with the military situation itself.

Mary Robinson, the former Irish president and now UN Commissioner for Human Rights, and Madeleine Albright. US Secretary of State have both visited Rwanda in the past 10 days, and voiced their fears about the worsening situation in the north-west.



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US wary as Iran tries to exorcise its demons

Within hours of Iranian President Khatami's appeal for a 'dialogue' with the United States, Washington was demanding 'deeds, not words' from the Iranian leader. As our Middle East correspondent explains, however, Iran is more anxious than ever to broaden its relationships with the outside world.

Iran has never been so anxious for contact with the outside world as it is today. Even under the Shah, that faithful ally of Washington - the so-called "Light of the Aryans" - Persia was an introverted, xenophobic nation.

All the more ironic, therefore, that the country which its enemies wish to portray as backward, medieval and degenerate should hold out its arms – through its newly elected President Mohamed Khatami - to the United States.

Yet this extraordinary transformation has now come to pass. The internal struggles with the revolution's old guard continue, but Mr Khatami - if he lives long enough to accomplish his ambitions - seems set on bringing Iran back into mittee, Israel's most powerful the comity of nations.

He knows, of course, that Washington's - and Israel's - attempt to isolate Iran has failed; the European Union and the Arabs who gathered for the Is- official who had helped set up lamic summit in Tehran last the meetings. True or false? week have seen to that.

conference in Tehran on Sun- which President Rafsanjani reday was a challenge to the US. mained head of state - it seems Even his remarks on the Pales- an unlikely tale. Mr Khatami tinians at last week's Islamic may have been an innocent conference - that they should soul when on Sunday be ex- Israel to buy the freedom of have a state, an end to occupa- pressed his respect "for the tion, the return of refugees sounded almost identical to they had not elected President America's official policies on the Clinton – but he is no fool. To

words" will not improve rela- Iranian adversaries, especially Tehran. The US wants to talk Khamenei, enough ammuniabout Iran's "terrorism" - tion to call for his impeachment. something Iran will not admit

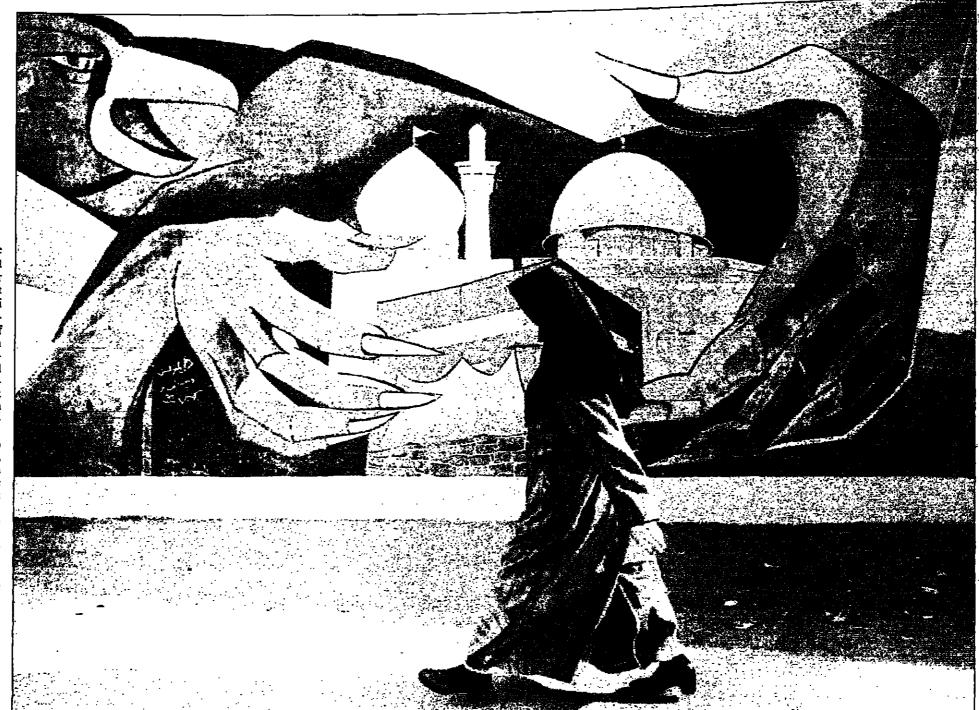
to - and its opposition to the now defunct Middle East "peace process", which Mr Khatami says he is against but will not obstruct. Mr Khatami would far rather start with a discussion of the vast amount of money - a cool \$11bn - which the US owes to the pre-revolutionary Iranian regime. And meanwhile he has to face his internal enemies, who claim that any American praise for Iran will signal a betrayal of the Islamic revolution.

He has problems enough to contend with. Earlier this year, when it seemed as if Syria wished to improve its relations with the US, Israeli press reports claimed that "secret contacts" had been made between officials from Damascus and Jerusalem. The story was untrue, but the result predictable: Syria denied the claim, condemned Israel for making it and angered the Americans. Now the Iranians want to repair their shattered relationship with the US - and are greeted by a similar story. According to the Israeli dai-

ly Haaretz. Washington and Tehran began a "clandestine dialogue" in Europe shortly after Mr Khatami's May election. Israel, the paper said, expressed its "concern", while the Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, asked AIPAC - the American-Israeli Public Affairs Comlobby group in the US-to prevent such a change in American policy. Haaretz insisted its story came from an unnamed former Clinton administration

Since Mr Khatami did not But his remarkable press take office until August - before great American people – as if open secret talks with the Talking about "deeds not Americans would be to give his Reagan, a made-in-Israel cake is to de-beastialise Iran, to officials at the ministry of Isthe religious guide, Ali

No one, of course, has for-



New view: A poster put up in Tehran for the recent Islamic summit depicting 'satanic powers' trying to destroy Islam. Tehran's line is now less extreme

*mpoter

De la Cortainiy it is. MESS WOTTERS

with more lost than

som especially KallSe, Says keen very often these

stile obvious

gotten that Iran, Israel and the US have been deeply involved in each other's affairs since the 1979 revolution. While Washington was secretly supporting Saddam Hussein's invasion of Iran, it was co-operating with

BY ROBERT **FISK**

American hostages in Lebanon - with clandestine missue snip ments and a covert visit to Iran by Robert McFarlane (along with a Bible from President and a set of duelling pistols).

Mr Rafsanjani broke the story - and thus saved his presidency - before Washington struggling to create civil peace could vouchsafe its own version

of this ridiculous affair. Once it was revealed - by Mr Ratsanjani himself - that US diplomats had travelled to Tehran on fraudulent Irish passports (the originals appear to have been stolen from the Irish embassy in Athens) and once it became known that Mr McFarlane had subsequently tried to kill himself, the Iranian president was

True, the Iranians walk the same corridors as the Americans at the UN. True, too. US officials have put the mujahedin-qulq - Iran's fiercest op- medium of television, through ponents, with bases in Iraq - on the American list of international "terrorists". But this is a long way from secret dialogue. What President Khatami wants present his country - with all its problems and flaws and human-rights abuses - as a nation

and freedom of thought, some-

thing which Americans supposedly prize in their own society. "At the appropriate time. I'll present my words to the American people," he said in Tehran on Sunday, "I'd hope for a thoughtful dialogue with the American people and through this thoughtful dialogue we could get closer to peace and security and tranquillity." He wanted no more talking with

"forked tongues". And it is probably true that the president intends to open this "dialogue" through the interviews with American journaiists and – pernaps – an exchange of academics between both countries.

Even before his election. lamic guidance were circulating copies of an article by the American commentator Milton Viorst which called for a reasoned relationship with Iran.

Saddam toys with UN

The Chief UN weapons inspector, Richard Butler, said yesterday that Iraq was insisting his inspectors could not enter presidential palaces despite his demands for unrestricted access throughout

"Iraq has said that will not occur. That is the question that the Security Council will have to consider, whether it is prepared to accept that or not." Mr Butler said after talks with the Iraqi deputy prime minister, Tariq Aziz, yesterday.

Mr Butler said that Iraq was prepared to let inspectors into other sensitive sites "in varying degrees".

Mr Butler's deputy.

picture in the talks of its definition of three categories of inspections sites: "normal" sites where the UN has ongoing inspections, "sensitive" sites which touch on its security concerns, and "presiden-

"On the sites that we are permitted to inspect, they have expressed a willingness to be flexible," he said.

Iraqi officials have been adamant in public statements ahead of the talks that "presidential sites" remain off-limits to the UN.

The issue of access has dogged the inspectors for six years. They say Iraq consistently tried to conceal elements Charles Duelfer, said earlier of its weapons programmes

sites where those items may have been hidden.

 With an increased possibility of germ warfare, the US Defense Secretary, William Cohen, has decided America's 1.5 million men and women in uniform will be inoculated against anthrax.

The biological agent can be fatal even in microscopic amounts.

The inoculations, which involve six shots over 18 months will cost about \$120m (£72m), senior Pentagon officials said yesterday, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The concern is for protecting US forces amid a mounting threat of biological or chemical warfare against that Iraq had given a clearer and has blocked them from troops at home or overseas.



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Impotence: the woman's story

It's a man's problem, isn't it? Certainly it is. But it's a woman's despair especially because, says Fiona Hanlock, very often there is much more lost than just the obvious.

Women have four different reactions to a man's impotence, says Margaret Ramage, a sexual relationship therapist First is a feeling that she is not attractive enough or sexy enough. Second is suspicion. the conviction that her partner must be having an affair. "I was sure my partner was seeing someone else," said 30-year-old Susan. "We'd always had a great sex life and then suddenly it stopped, just like that. I was always accusing him, and he would promise me that he had nothing on the side, but I honestly couldn't believe him."

Third is the feeling of relief if the woman never enjoyed sex in the first place. "Sometimes it can be a relief for both partners," says Margaret Ramage. "Some people are no good at making love and never have been and struggle with it throughout their married life, thinking it has to be done because that's what's expected of you in a marriage."

And fourth is the feat that there's something seriously wrong with her man - that he must be suffering from diabetes, or working too hard.

"My husband s been to see three sex therapists," says 49year-old Jane, married to a man who has been impotent for eight years. "None of them ever wanted to see me, despite the fact that impotency is a joint problem suffered by both partners, not just one. One doctor said to my husband, 'Well, she's 49, so why is she bothered?' Can you believe it? I have felt so terribly rejected. I would cuddle up to him and make all kinds of efforts, but was just pushed away. I didn't feel feminine any more. I'm a no sex life? I can see it hap avoid any kind of contact. sis so partners are often right most things but this really me. Just because you don't and undressed in another room. It turned out that Jane's husjust mean the inability to have the partnerships in which all in- and he even stopped calling me counsellor who encouraged and therefore, however kind as well as men's."



Bed inmates: feelings of rejection, isolation, lack of love that an impotent man's partner may feel are often ignored

intercourse. My husband has also lost all desire. So kissing is not even sensuous."

'It's extremely important that both partners come for counselling," says Margaret Ramage. "Often the women are more in need of it than the men, but men are against their partners coming to therapy or counselling because they feel so ashamed and feel it's something they have to deal with on their own. They don't realise that sex has a lot more to do with intimacy than an erect penis or even bed. One couple came to me saying they had no sex life and yet they were sitting close, making eye contact, flirting and talking about things they used to do in bed. I said, 'What do you mean you have ing as quickly as possible to floors me. Most people don't achieve penetration doesn't so I wouldn't see him naked, band had diabetes, though not

timacy is cut out that often break up, not because of the lack of an erection."

Part of the problem is that some men, most of whom see sex in terms of performance, cannot understand that most women see sex in terms of their relationship. So to start with they may try to make love and fail, and then they get so discouraged and anxious that they cannot bear to be cuddly or even kiss for fear it will lead to sex and another failure.

"My man eventually withdrew completely." said Paula, who lived with an impotent man for a year. "First he refused to cuddle up, then he refused to kiss me, then he'd just sueak out of bed in the morn-

intimacy left at all because he in sexy clothes and have sex in can't bear to give his partner closeness might lead to a fail- try lane". It made me feel sick. cause he believes that peneure in performance, which he couldn't bear. We split up at ressing and touching for 10 everything. "Anyway, other that point. A therapist I saw said I was taking my man's anx-start massaging each other. ieties on to my own shoulders. All I wanted was for someone says Jane. and it was his worries about his sexuality I was experiencing, not my own. But I did feel that up to a point I was having to damp down my own sexuality in the face of my partner's lack of potency, and that made me feel even more unsexy and

Nearly all men have periods f impotence after the age of 45. With long-term problems it's found that many cases of impotence have a medical ba-

obviously felt that any kind of unusual places, like in a coun- sexual pleasure manually be-He was then told to stop all caweeks and then gradually to to actually talk to me. I was going through hell and back. The partner in impotence is totally ignored and any trauma you may be going through yourself with feelings of total rejection, isolation, lack of love, are just left for you to deal with. And what is worse is that because it is such a personal problem and you want to be loyal to your partner, you can't

> even family or friends. What about other ways of impotent man is often reluctant to try this because any hint of

'darling'." Finally there was no him to ask his wife to "dress up and unselfish he may be, he tration, erection and orgasm is ways of having sex are not the same; you want to feel wanted,"

There are many more medical treatments on offer than there used to be. Injections can cause erections and even enable the man to ejaculate; vacuum pumps are more difficult to use, but they can often work successfully - they can make a man have an orgasm but not ejaculate. But many couples find them distasteful until they get used to them.

talk about it to anyone, not "The problem is that these treatments are not providing the cure they should," says businesswoman and I can take pening even now, in front of Then he started getting dressed to worry that their men are ill. having sex? Unfortunately, an Margaret Ramage. "They simply address the erection probem when in fact women's realise that impotency doesn't mean you have no sex life.' It's He stopped holding my hand before he'd been to one sex sex reminds him of his failure anxieties should be addressed

Keeping Father Christmas fit for duty

Every year, as Christmas approaches, Santa Claus visits his local health centre for a check-up. We have had an exclusive look at his doctor's report.

Name: Mr S Claus, aka Father Christmas, St Nicholas,

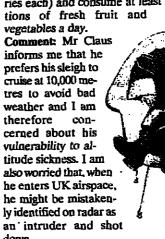
Age: approx 1,717 (born AD 280). Marital status: single, but lives with numerous cives and several animal companions.

Nationality: originally from Asia Minor, now lives at North

Occapation: an early Christian bishop turned toy-deliverer. Also the patron saint of children and seafarers.

Comment: Mr Claus is in remarkably good shape for a man of his age. (He already exceeds the life expectancy of the average European by 1,648 years.) However, his large waist circumference and higher than recommended body mass make him vulnerable to heart disease and diabetes.

Recommendation: he should eat fewer mince pies (200 calories each) and consume at least five por-



Recommendation: he should

ensure that his sleigh keeps below 3,000 metres at all times. If he does go higher, he will need to carry oxygen. Having consulted the RAF on his behalf. I have advised him to file a flight plan prior to departure and install an identifying transponder. In any event, so long as he shows no hostile intent, I am assured he will be escorted safely into UK air-

Comment: the Met Office informs me that the temperature in Finnish Lapland at 6pm last Christmas Eve was -20C. In London, it was -1C and in Glasgow -2C. The patient is clearly at considerable risk of hypothermia and frostbite.

Recommendation: Warm clothing is essential. The British Mountaineering Council tells me he should wear six layers of clothing, including three inner layers of thermal insulation and an all-in-one down suit; three pairs of gloves; three pairs of socks and plastic boots; a tubular scarf; and a bulaclava, hat and hood.

Comment: Mr Claus says he enjoys a glass of whisky in each house he visits. (There are over 7 million households with children in Britain alone.) While he feels the alcohol could help reduce his risk of heart disease, I consider the consumption of several million units of alcohol in one night makes severe intoxication inevitable and death a serious possibility.

ne The nationt has been ach for the road" and, even when not driving, to limit his intake to four units a day. Given his obvious alcohol dependency. this will be a struggle but counselling is available. Mr Claus may wish to drink Coca-Cola instead but he should be aware that each 330ml can contains the equivalent of seven teaspoons of sugar.

Comment: Mr Claus's occupation carries considerable risks: exposure to soot in the chimneys through which he frequently descends can cause skin and lung cancers as well as ulcers on the corneal surface of the eye: climbing up and down roofs and chimneys presents obvious risks of falling; and back trouble could result from lifting a heavy sack of presents.

Recommendation: the Health and Safety Executive warns that work at a height exceeding two metres requires either scuffolding or firmly secured ladders. I have therefore advised Mr Claus to enter buildings only by the front door. (If he insists on using his traditional route, goggles, a face mask and hard hat will be essential.) Attendance at a training course on safe lifting techniques is also recommended.

Comment: on Christmas Eve, Mr Claus has to complete a heavy workload before a fixed deadline. Stress and fatigue are inevitable, increasing the risk of irritability, mood swings, errors and accidents.

Recommendation: the patient should tackle his stress by taking up meditation or yoga. The colour red can cause an increase in heart rate and blood pressure so he should consider changing his coat to a more relaxing blue. He should spread his workload over several nights or, better still, change to a daytime shift.

Comment: Mr Claus is required to work in close proximity to large numbers of children in air-conditioned shopping malls. This increases the likelihood of colds and flu.

Recommendation: given the patient's age, a flu vaccination is advisable. He should also increase his immunity by regular moderate exercise (this will also help him lose weight) and taking a vitamin supplement.

Peter Baker

DR PHIL **HAMMOND**

EastEnders has come in for a bit of stick with Bianca and Ricky's abnormal haby dilemma but, from what I have seen of it, the observation and dialogue have been superb. "What do we do? Kill this one and keep the next? Keep getting rid of them until a good one comes up? I don't feel we have the right to make a choice." In the end they did, deciding that a child with a combination of spina bifida and hydrocephalus was more than they could cope with. That was

Folic acid - the agony of ignorance

a few episodes ago, but their guilt will last the lifetime of the soap. This isn't helped when a

doctor points out that the baby probably would have been healthy if Bianca had taken folic acid supplements before and during pregnancy. Since it wasn't planned, not a single supplement passed Bianca's lips. At present, preventing your baby from having a crippling disease is only an option for those couples who map out their future family on a Psion organiser. And there aren't many of them in Albert Square.

EastEnders has a proud tradition of newsy health storylines (Mark's HIV. Peggv's breast cancer, Jo's schizophrenia) but it has taken them six years to pick up on folic acid. Way back in 1991, the Medical Research Council's Vitamin Study Group announced that the incidence of neural tube defects such as spina bifida could be reduced by 75 per cent if all pregnant women took tions and 150 give birth to se-pregnancies and are less aware

400meg of folic acid each day verely handicapped children. of health issues. American food from three months before conception to the end of the 12th week of pregnancy. It was an amazing discovery that has

achieved virtually nothing. Professional and public awareness remained low and by 1996, a pitiful 9 per cent of women had even heard about folic acid. This spurred the Health Education Authority into a very expensive advertising campaign (remember Zue Wanamaker and the retreating sperm?). Six months later. a large survey found that although 93 per cent of women had now heard about folic acid and 71 per cent of mothers took it at some stage during pregnancy, only one in 10 took it from well before conception to week 12 - the time needed for it to be effective.

At present, a thousand couples a year suffer the trauma of miscarriages and late termina-

and that this number will grow

most of whom would have normal spines but for a short course of a cheap, safe, water-soluble vitamin. Health education in itself will continue to achieve nothing whilst 35-50 per cent of pregnancies are unplanned. Even if all women are more tolate-rich green vegetables, the effect would be minimal because naturally occurring folate is hard to absorb from the gut and is destroyed by cooking. In raw form, you'd need to eat six pounds of sprouts a day to absorb the amount needed and you're unlikely to feel like sex

In 1996, the US Center for Disease Control recognised that health education and overthe-counter tablets would never deliver a significant reduction in neural tube defects (NTDs). especially since their prevalence is greatest among the young and poor who don't plan

manufacturers were ordered to add folic acid to flour and a variety of staple foodstuffs as the only realistic chance of prevention. This comes into effect from January 1998.

In the UK we're much more reticent about adding things to the food chain. But folic acid is already added to 15 per cent of breads and 50 per cent of cereals, although it would take 12 slices or four howls a day to prevent NTDs. Adding enough to flour so that everyone got 400meg from, say, two slices of bread would not affect the taste of meet objections from millers. Neither would it be expensive - the money wasted on ineffective health education could have funded the programme for several years.

There is one argument against fortification - a very rare but potentially serious neurological side effect of folio acid can becur in elderly people with un-

association between folic acid intake and the prevention of heart disease, which is likely to be of far more benefit to the elderly. If this proves to be the case, fortification is the only humane option. Although NTDs are rare, affecting only 0.3 per 1,000 live births, it is presently only abortion that prevents them from being 10 times as common. Folic acid is a far kinder and cheaper form of prevention, with the added benefit that you have a healthy baby at the end. For those who did the research, the knowledge that 7,000 pregnancies have since ended that could have been saved, and a 1,000 children with spina bifida could have had normal spines must be hard to take.

treated Vitamin B1? deficiency

However, there is also a strong

Today Helen Brinton MP tabled an Early Day Motion in the House of Commons calling for the addition of folic acid to flour

VITAL SIGNS

A delicate balance

Doctors cannot get it right, Either they are accused of patronising patients by witholding information or they are accused of avoiding responsibility by overloading them with it.

An illustration of the problem comes from researchers in Hull who interviewed patients with terminal cancer about how satisfied they felt with the information they had received about their illness.

were frustrated that the doctor Cases of diabetes are set to dou-

avoided the word "cancer", but an almost equal number (18 per cent) wanted "less frightening

searchers, who presented the findings to the winter meeting of the British Thoracic Society said: "Even where honesty is the policy and experienced doctors are at hand, it is very hard to deliver bad news to patient sand meet individual needs."

One quarter of the patients Diabetes on the increase

Full database of NHS Trusts 1998 100% just updated direct from trusts Disc or directory. Tel: 0171 722 5596

ble worldwide over the next decade. A study by the British Diabetic Association published in Diabetic Medicine estimates words used such as tumour". that there are 123 million with Justin Gore, one of the rethe condition in the world today

> to 220 million by the year 2010. Asia and Africa will feel the brunt of the rise and Asia will be home to 61 per cent of diabeties in 2010. Professor George Alberti, vice-chairman of the association and president of the Royal College of Physicians, said: This research paints a very bleak picture. It is vital that attempts to change lifestyle are stepped up and that investment in finding a

> > Seeing double

cure is increased".

The average amount spent on spectacles was \$5,14 last year, could be saved if treatment down from £93.57 the year be were concentrated in the hands

fore, despite the growing popularity of designer frames. The total number of contact lenses sold doubled from 25.8 million to 47.2 million but most of the increase was due to the growth. in sales of disposable lenses. There were 14.6 million sight tests, just over half of which were carried out on the NHS.

Embarrassing evidence Embarrassment can be a fatal condition. In the case of cancer of the bowel, the second biggest cancer killer, there is evidence that embarrassment is sending thousands of patients to unnecessary deaths, covering up low standards and keeping the cancer out of the public eye.

Cure rates for bowel cancer vary widely between hospitals. and between surgeons, and fives

of the best, according to new guidelines issued by the health department. Bowel cancer killed over

> like most common cancers, is completely curable if caught early. Its curability is linked to the fact that it remains localised until relatively advanced. It the cancer is removed completely there is a good chance. it will not recur. However, only a minority of patients get ideal treatment.

Diagnosis is frequently delayed because patients are embarrassed to consult their GPs about the early signs, such as blood in the faeces. Most who need surgery are operated on by general surgeons who do not have the specialist skills necessary to ensure all the cancer is

removed. The guidance, sent to all

GPs. Health Authorities and NHS Trusts, says studies in Scotland show that survival after five years varies from 20 per 17,500 people in 1996 but, un- cent to 60 per cent depending on the surgeon carrying out the operation. One hospital had twice the failure rate of others. The low overall survival rate is linked with the advanced stage of the cancers at diagnosis.

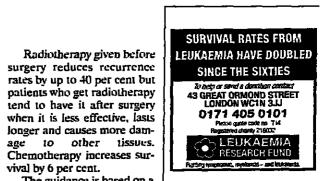
It says surgery should be restricted to those surgeons who show good results with low recurrence rates. The best results, which halve the risk of the cancer recurring, are achieved by a complex opera- are much more serious with this tion involving meticulous dis- cancer than with others. But it section of the tissues surrounding the rectum. Known as Total Mesorectal Excision (TME) it requires specialist training and is currently carried out by only a "limited number of surgeons".

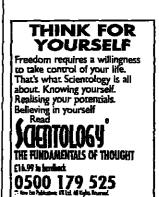
The guidance is based on a review of research by the NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination at the University of York. Arabella Melville, chief author of the review, said: "The variations in treatment

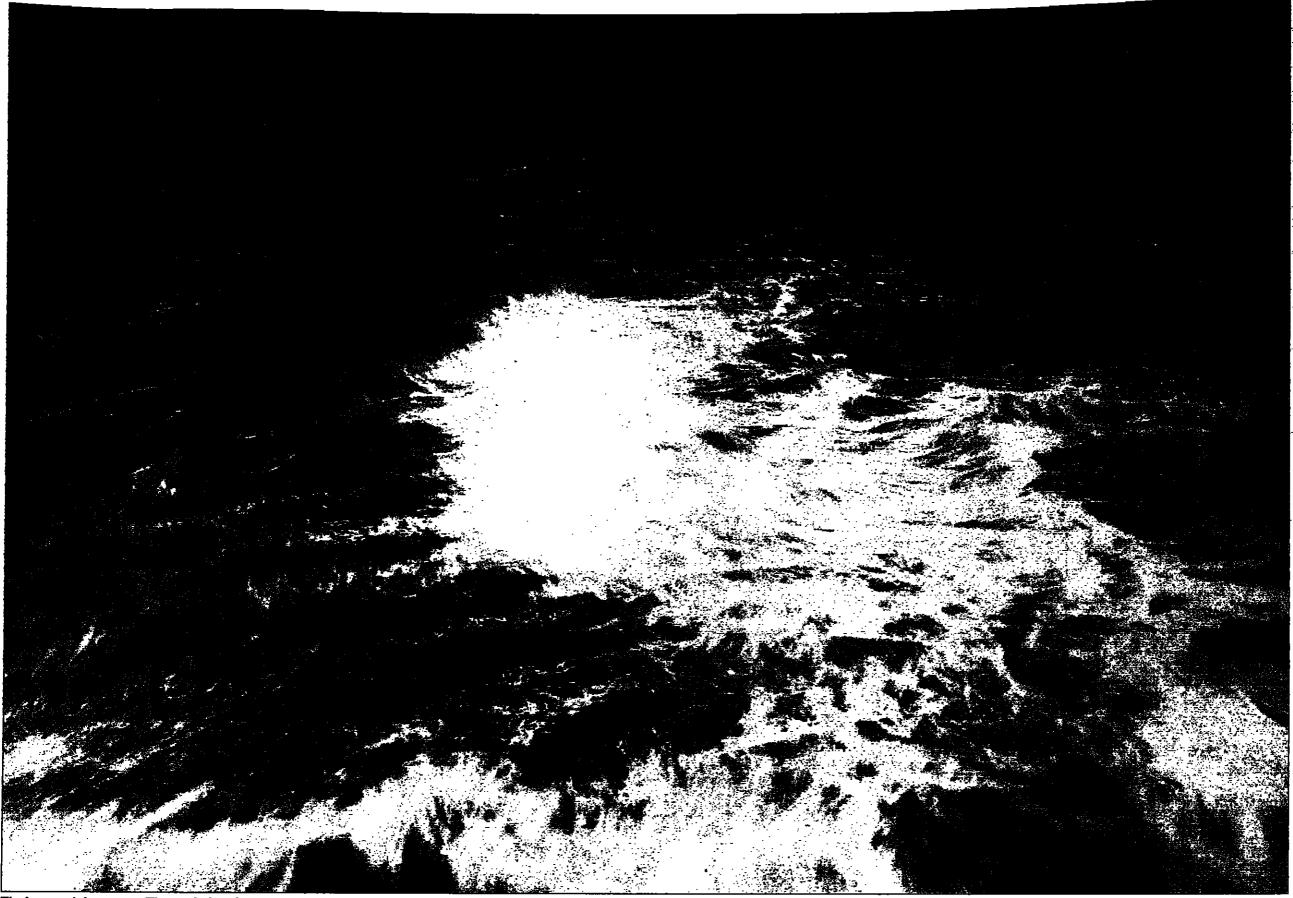
vival by 6 per cent.

doesn't have a high profile. It is not something people want to know about. Thousands of lives could be saved every year by following this guidance."

Jeremy Laurance







Alone, alone, all, all alone, alone on a wide, wide sea!

'Worth seeing? Yes; but not worth going to sea' (as Dr Johnson very nearly said). Tom Lubbock contrasts the sea-pictures of two photographers whose work appears oceans apart.

The film Waterworld raised an that the scale of this new Flood sea always looks infinite. Its iming thought. The problem was average dolphin-movie. The

interesting problem about rep- couldn't be directly pictured. mensities are a pictorial cliché. premise was that sea levels stretching away to the horizon had risen so high that ocean in all directors; but when you're covered the whole planet. Wa- in the middle of it, that's how ter was literally everywhere, the sea looks anyway. Waterthere was no more land, every- world couldn't supply the eye body was a sailor - a frighten- with any more water than the

Thomas Joshua Cooper's pictures. This American photographer, resident in Scotland for a long time, has 10 years' work now showing at the Fruitmarket Gallery in Edinburgh, with the title "Where the Rivers Flow", and there's a good deal of river here too, and rock. But it's the sea pictures that take the strongest hold. They're not enormous, but they fill the eye and the mind.

Cooper's sea doesn't look infinite in the normal way, and the reason is simple enough. The horizon is kept out of the frame. The sea fills the scene. The limits these photos dwell on aren't the horizon's vanishing lines; rather, the land's edges. They're all taken on shore or just off-shore, at extreme points of coastline - the westernmost points of Europe. say, around Cape St Vincent in Portugal, or the northernmost points of Scotland, Ireland and Wales, or on the English Channel, or the far reaches of the

Rocks rise and waves break, but they aren't views, strictly speaking, and their sense of scale is uncertain. It's the sea. its surface, its depths, its movement, that makes the going. Take an image like Atlantic Ocean, Ardnamurchan Point. A mariner or a hydrologist might be able to say what was going on precisely, but what the viewer sees is a ferment of swelling, breaking water. A slow exposure has allowed the foam to streak into a field of flames - flames that lick over the surface like a petrol fire ~ which rises to a vortex of maximum intensity in the centre of the picture, emanating a kind of light-halo; and, beyond that, there's obscurity, in which (if you look closer) the approaching waves are stroked in darkon-dark with a heautiful fine-brush delicacy.

Elsewhere the water writhes and twists like muscles under skin, or lies hard and growed like the face of the moon, or becomes an abyss of smoke or a desert struck with flashes and bursts. Beground support for the images' yond the effects of slow exposure. Cooper's tones and textures are them, can you read it back out?

rare precision (though I'm not of the exposures, yes, though genreal subject (the sort of turned on to the beach - on erally they're not that prolonged, and every photographic image

sure that I quite believe that halo). The pictures are generally sombre, and their dim illumination - evening, early morning, sometimes moonlight - unifies them; but it's remarkable how, with such narrow contrasts, they achieve such clear resolution. It is a masterly touch at work. One can hardly avoid talking the language of painting or etching. The straction, or, at any rate, is getting high visionary treatment.

intensity, but, having read it into

tos generally make you think of their real location more keenly than paintings do, and these It seems important to say are charged sites that Cooper something about how Cooper visits, indeed the ends of the operates. These photos involved earth - intimating the limits of a lot of trekking and wading, a culture, or the beginnings of armed with a big 100-year-old a great expansion. The title of box camera and a tripod; a long one sequence, portraying the period of watching and waiting, sea off the Isle of Lewis, is At sometimes waist-deep in water; the End of the World (The Edge and then a single picture is takof the Celtic World). Another: en, with exposure times that are The World's Edge. Remembering never snaps and can last for Magellan - The Atlantic Ocean, hours. I give this information, Five Capes - Portigal (The Edge with its intimations of ritual of the Renaissance World). quest, solitude, meditation, unique act - as everyone who writes about Cooper gives it, although myself not quite sure is offered an impressive sight you what to make of it. It offers back-

So the titles indicate. And yet the actual sense of place is weak. You rarely feel that here might see yourself (landmarks are few). Nor, on the other hand, that the photographer's sharp eye has made a strange formal worked up in the printing with You're conscious of the duration monvee that plays against the

transforming find that might occur in an Edward Weston seaview). But just this seems to me have that sort of sharp eye, nor an eye for the simply dramatic. His sea is treated abstractly, visionarily, but in a way very objectively. It's the same thing: with the sea, abstract and concrete, subjective and objective are one. These pictures are true

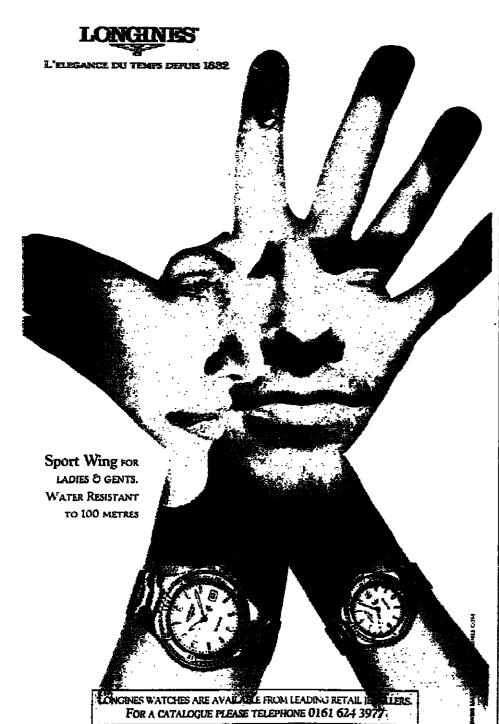
because they are immersed. But no doubt they want something more, a resonance that their charged place names They want to be an epiphany of the sacred. I too feel in an obscure way that the sea should be silly or helpless when you can't reverenced, but without treadtranscendental ways; and I'm reluctant to praise work for believing things I don't. Suffice to say that there's great intensity of attention here, and an opportunity for it in the viewer too,

and that's value enough. At the Photographers' Gallery in London, you can get another view of the sea, from the Italian photographer Massimo Vitali, It adopts, in almost every way, the opposite angle. Vitali's camera is set up in the sea, but

beaches packed with baskers and bathers and strollers. These huge, high-angled colour pictures Cooper's strength. He doesn't set out wide panoramas of modem seaside leisure, with their patterns of little encampments of parasols, loungers and spread towels. (Beach life is a beginners' exercise when you study Demography.) The effect can't

help being ironic. Certainly an overflowing beach isn't my idea of fun either, and one can well agree that collective relaxation is a very rulebound affair. But these pictures and ritual procedures point to. are too dependent on the simple observation that people enjoying themselves tend to look see what it is they re enjoying. ing too far down mystical or And what's missing from these scenes - deliberately removed, by turning the view round - is their real focal point: the water stretching out before them. People don't just go to the seaside to get hot and wet. They go to be in the strengthening presence of the sea. It's no good taking the piss.

Cooper: 10 10 Jan, Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh (0131-225 2383). Vitali: to 17 Jan, Photographers' Gallery, London (0171-



implies a photographic act of which one can be vaguely aware. But with Cooper's work the two

seem in fact to be peculiarly di-

vorced, because of the great

proportion of the picture-mak-

the sense of place. Again, pho-

I feel a similar thing about

ing done in the studio.

General MS2

I had to sell myself but not be a prostitute

REVELATIONS

THE TIME: 1996 THE PLACE: MAYFAIR THE MAN: JEAN-CHRISTOPHE NOVELLI - CHEF AND RESTAURATEUR

I was the chef at the Four Seasons Hotel in Mayfair - a good secure job - but I felt I had the potential to do more. I woke up one morning and knew my wheels were spinning in mud. Instead of going to work, I went to visit my friend Marco Pierre White in his restaurant. We sat down for coffee and he saw there was a problem straight away. "Jean, you should start your own place," he advised.

My problem was that I didn't have any money. But Marco knew somewhere for sale. "It's the perfect place for you," he said. We went for a dinner of goat's cheese and steak to a part of London I had never been to before - Clerkenwell. When I saw the environment, after Park Lane, I thought he was joking! It was called the café St Pierre and not at all upmarket; I felt like jumping from a plane. After a long chat, Marco convinced me to come back in daylight at lunch time. The next day I returned and the area was busy with city types, although the café was quiet.

I asked Marco why he had been so convinced about the place. He told me that 10 years ago he had been the head chef there. We managed to knock a third off the price of the sale. Unfortunately, Nat West offered me only 70 per cent of what I needed so I had to think about a partner. Thank goodness I decided against the idea because for just £40.000 somebody would now own half of my business. (My company is worth £3.2m after just 18 months.) I had to sell myself but not be a prostitute.

I was still at the Four Seasons; they knew nothing about the venture or they would have sacked me. So to raise the extra money I worked on a cross-channel ferry between Dover and Calais at the weekend. Five days a week I was one of the top chefs in the UK in a Michelin star restaurant; but on my days off I cooked egg, chips and I was sea sick. I couldn't stand up in heavy weather. But I had to do it because that never thought of giving up because I can absorb a lot of problems - that is my virtue. Finally I bought a lease for 20 years, but for the first three months I didn't have the landlord's consent. He wanted £20,000 guarantee to prove that I could pay the rent, but I didn't have the money. So he was waiting to see if I could pay - if not I would

have lost everything. I had been working in one of the most own place I had to use school tables and white metal chairs. I did not even have my name on the front because I couldn't afford ** the signwriter. I had a week's salary from my old job that I used for eash flow to buy wine and food, I was very lucky because three staff came for just £150 to help me. I said. "If you work. I'll give you shares." We suffered. I was working like a dog from early morning to late at night. In fact we slept there because the terrines were in the oven and there was preparation to do for the next day. At the weekend, I would clean

I had the same spirit, the same passion. the same love for food as I always had but I fouldn't buy expensive produce. I had to g to the market and buy the most econumical ingredients. Diners paid £150 a



restaurant I used to provide the same con-nalist from Time Out. beans! It is very difficult to work on a boat; cept in a much cheaper way. I was charging £3.50 for a starter and £6.95 for a main course. A month later I was almost bankmoney was just enough to buy the place, I - rupt because my cash flow was low. I had some overheads I wasn't expecting and my takings were not big enough.

> loan shark - quick money at a high rate of interest (22 per cent). I rang and pretended that I still worked for the Four Seasons and needed £10,000 to re-do my flat. Every morning I was checking the post, and there was nothing. A week later they sent me a cheque, I couldn't believe it. I've never cried in my life but I nearly cried that day, I said, "Thank God." That was my last bullet to survive. Even if one day I have £10 million in my pocket. I will never forget that cheque.

Shortly afterwards, a small man and his daughter came to eat and he asked me my name and complimented me on the food. He wanted to look around, I was frightened that he was a hygiene inspector! Finally, he said. "When you were the chef at the Four Seasons. I are there. Today I didn't pay the same price but I can assure you the meal

When the review was published, there

was a queue outside and not enough food in my fridge. I was fully booked and in one month my turnover grew to more than 10 I'm willing to risk everything I've got but nearly the amount of my original loan from I knew that physically I was going to die: the bank. I got a result and I will never foryou can only work so hard. I was walking get that excitement. However, the tougharound thinking, "I'm finished". I told no est moment is now. Eighteen months ago, one; I didn't want to discourage them. One I had only four staff but now I employ 100 Sunday I went to Covent Garden and drank people. Everything has become so large it a coffee in a cafe and on the table there is uncontrollable. It is hard, my name is 10 was a newspaper. In it was an advert for a times bigger, but when I go back home to bed I am still a human being. I have to take a sleeping tablet and I wake up in the morning and become an animal. If I do not have the fighting instinct 1

know I will die, so I have to be like that every day. On a Sunday, if I take time off, I become a zombie because my brain can't cope with being slow. Once I took off three days and I was ill, there was not enough adrenaline coming in. It's a very narrow world in the kitchen. The greatest people are more expressive but it is not a life. It is impossible, I promise you ~ it kills you. I have no interests except work and the time I spend with my girlfriend or my friends - especially Marco Pierre White. I don't go to the pictures. I don't watch TV or read newspapers. My life is a very strict and rigid formula. I don't get paid a wage, every penwas exactly the same." I thanked him, he - ny goes back into the business. I don't care had at the Four Seasons but in my cafe-paid the bill and revealed that he was a jour-where I live. I could buy a house tomor-

row but I still rent a one-bedroom flat. Money is irrelevant; I take cash out of the till if I need a taxi. I'm happy with nothing. Exssing myself and to prove a point is much more important. I'm happy but exhausted, times its previous size. From £4.500 pounds I slept just four hours last night. I had a baa week, I started taking £65,000, which was nana this morning but I haven't eaten all

> Five days a week I was one of the top chefs in the UK in a Michelin star restaurant: at weekends I worked on a cross-channel ferry cooking eggs, chips and beans

day - just two litres of coffee and a packet of cigarettes. Everybody tells me that I have to be careful and look after myself but I swear that if I become bankrupt tomorrow I will shoot myself. I will never work for someone cise. What has happened is unique. I don't want to regret anything. There is so much competition, it is like football and music. One minute superb, the

I don't want to go back to where I came from, Growing up in France was hard, my

er caught polio in a public pond when she was only four. This was during the war. She was paralysed up to the neck and the whole family walked from the North down to the South to avoid the Germans. She has recovered to some extent and is now only paralysed to the hip but she could never ride a bicycle or drive a car. Her life was her. As a boy, I nearly died. I would jump from the roof of one house to another. I always had to speak so I was put on I was sent to the transition class for peobut I wasn't thick, I was disturbed. I didn't

We lived near a bakery and every morning when I went to school I used to see the lights in the basement and would stop to watch the men working away in their white coats. I liked the smell and the warmth. I started working in the bakery at Jean-Christophe Novelli's restaurants include weekends from 6am until 11 at night. But one day there was a terrible accident. The apprentice got crushed in the blender, they couldn't stop him being dragged in and he

know how to express myself.

died. After that I was not allowed to go parents didn't have any money. My mothback. Times were tough and I was misunderstood; I was thrown out of school, they told me I was wasting my time. I was 14. I am lucky, but the reason I am successful is not that I am a good chef or have a good formula, it's because I persist and I don't worry. For my French National Service I was trained as a blue beret and sent to the very limited and I was too hyperactive for Lebanon. It was very intensive. I learnt to be myself under pressure.

I had a million reasons to close up and fell and my jumper caught on a nail stick- push the keys under the door of my first ing out of the gutter. My friends pulled me restaurant but I did not panic. I now have up by the neck and nearly strangled me. I six places, four in London and one in ust had to risk things. I would knock my- France and South Africa. I have paid for self against walls. I was completely crazy. everything myself. Next year I have my own At school I couldn't stay at my desk and television series and I will be leatured on a commercial for Sea France, the crosstablets. One day they actually tied me to channel ferry I previously worked for, promy chair because I disrupted the class. I moting their gastronomic menu. I've learnt used to hate the routine. Finally, aged 10, a valuable lesson - the importance of being accessible. I'm very excited about inple who are thick. I was there for four years; troducing top-level food to people who've not been able to afford it before. London is becoming the European gastronomic city and I know I have to improve or I will be back where I started. But I've survived a lot - it has to be something much bigger to destroy me.

> Maison Novelli; Novelli W8; Novelli EC1 and Les Saveurs de Jeun-Christophe Novelli.

> > Interview by Andrew G Marshall

A recipe for a crumbling ego

Eentually the food was fie, but the marriage was left red raw. When it cmes to dinner parties, says Melissa Nathan, that's tle way it has to be.

At old aunt of mine used to say. you can read, you can cook". A the start of a cooking session I lways find this wonderfully insiring. It's only an hour later. with an aching back, flour in my oe and one failed attempt alady in the bin, that I rememhr the old bat was totally tarking. And that I detest erything about cooking.

I hate deciding what to ake, shopping for ridiculous mounts of bizarre ingredients nd then turning my kitchen nto a warzone for a meal that akes five minutes to devour. So he Other Half and I live on simle, quick, unimaginative meals. But when it comes to dinner arties, there's a right and a crong way to do things. The ight way is to get flustered, anry and violent over a hot stove

and call me a traditionalist but that's the way it should be done. The Other Half vehemently disagrees. He thinks we should buy everything precooked, pre-packed and preposterously expensive. So when he invited a new

friend from work - plus girlfriend - to dinner one Saturday evening, we'd done the legwork on this familiar row so many times we were able to leap in halfway through. Quite sweet "I am not spending the day

with you in a foul mood, so we'll buy it all." he said firmly. He'll never forget my amazing sinking scones ... flying towards his head.

"Don't be ridiculous." I snapped even more firmly, "you don't invite people over to humiliate them." We compromised. We went

for a sample starter - steamed asparagus with hollandaise sauce (shop-bought) and garlie bread (shop-bought) followed by a baked pasta dish - made by while telling your Other Half Other Half on the day-followed It's alright for you, all you have by apple crumble made by me do is pour the wine". It's the day before. That way I'd only crown as Scratch Cooking - or be making one easy dish. What

in my kitchen Scream Cooking could possibly go wrong? Well, let me explain. I got up

at seven on Friday morning. I got all the crumble ingredients out. I rearranged them. I took the recipe book out. First horror-filled moment of the day. I realised that this recipe was just

'He'll never forget my amazing sinking scones ... flying towards his head'

a basic guide, full of phrases like "if your recipe states..." I felt a knot of anxiety form in my stomach. I rearranged the ingredients. I took a deep breath. another 36 hours. I'd cope. I'd it in the oven and within 40 mindo what any other mature adult would do in the same situation. I called my mother.

"You have to help," I said dramatically. "It's my dinner." "Thank God," she said, "I thought it was important." "It is important." I

screeched. I am without a crumble recipe." I realised I'd stopped breathing. "Do you have one?"

"No," she said apologetically. I've never really used one, Crumble is foolproof." I began to make small whimpering noises and picked absently at the sugar (soft dark

brown) while a tear welled up in my eye (salty). Read it to me," she said calmly.

I read it out in full. "That's a recipe." she said, "What more do you want, semaphore?"

There was a long pause. "OK. Byc" I put the phone down.

Mothers can sometimes find it hard to let go. I mixed together the ingredients in a bowl - and then ate half of it. Why does it always The guests weren't expected for taste so much better raw? I put utes the smell waited up the stairs where I was getting out of my shower.

> A minute later, the knot was back in my stomach. Other Half and I were examining the crumble intently. "It"s burnt." I whispered.

"No it's not," he lied firmly. "I burnt it. I failed at the foolproof crumble. I'm crap. I'm going to have to make another one. It's alright for you, all you have to do" etc ...

At that point Other Half went out for the afternoon to save our marriage. While he was out, I bought more butter and started again. This time I crouched in front of the oven and watched it cook. It wasn't just a load of ingredients in there, it was also my self respect. Oh yes, plus my sense of humour and sense of proportion. When it came out. I quality assurance tested so much of it that it looked like a ring doughout. But it tasted good. I decided to serve it in the kitchen.

By the time our guests came, Other Half and I weren't talking. I always find that adds a certain piquancy to a dinner party. But amazingly, the food was OK. Or maybe our guests were just polite.

"Î'm so impressed you didn't just go out and buy it all," said Tim. "If you came to us, it would all be shop-bought, you know."

Other Half froze. I laughed gaily. "How delightful," I trilled. And meant it.

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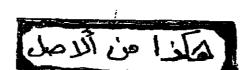
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A true story that puts the police in the dock



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Here is a true story, drawn from recent weeks. A youngish man went to his office Christmas party at a West End club. He had a few to drink, but left at around 11pm, reasonably early because there were young children at home, so he expected to be woken early. Sensibly, he wasn't driving, and set off in search of a taxi cab.

Just as he stepped out to cross the road a car came shooting past, and a siren suddenly blared out. He jumped back from the kerb in alarm, and, unwisely but not entirely surprisingly, shouted a foulmouthed curse at the rapidly receding

The vehicle was a police patrol car. As the man walked off, its driver scooted round a side street, eventually pulling up a little ahead. A large police officer jumped from the passenger side and marched up to our party-goer.

"Just wait here, my mate wants a word with you," the police officer said. Whereupon the officer driving the car emerged.

walked up, and started jabbing his finger towards our friend's chest. Our friend was not daft, and had not drunk so much as to be unaware that he should remain conciliatory. Which he did. But the police officer did not. He culminated his rant by declaring: "If you're not careful I'll have you down the station in a cell and really

sort you out." Astonished by this, our party-goer turned to a passing woman, and asked: "Did you hear what he just said? Did he say what I thought he said?" "Yes, indeed." she replied, "and I'm as astonished as you." Would you mind coming the police station and helping me file a complaint?" "Not at all," she replied, and off they went.

At the station, the party-goer then attempted to tell his tale. The attention he received was cursory. He demanded to see whoever was in charge. The officer who came in suggested that he'd had a bit to drink, and that in the cold light of day he might change his mind. It wasn't until the

party-goer pointed out that he was a trained lawyer, and was determined to pursue his complaint, that the officer started to take it seriously.

When this story is told among normal. law-abiding people in London, none of them express surprise. Amazingly, they regard it as perfectly normal. And that is perhaps even more shocking than the event itself. Expectations of the behaviour of Metropolitan Police officers is appallingly low. People are very well aware that far and away the majority of police officers, even in the metropolis, are decent human beings who exercise enormous restraint and skilled judgment in the face of all kinds of stress and provocation. But it is virtually impossible to find a London citizen who has not had some had experience or other with the Met. It is as common as being driven demented by the miseries of the Tube, or fed up with right-

wing cabbies. It's part of the life of the city.

dalous state of affairs to have - as we reported exclusively this morning - the largest police force in the country receiving 10,000 complaints from the public, leading to only 20 officers being disciplined. Of course, many of those complaints are diversions; they come from criminals and trouble-makers who want to cause problems for officers who are doing their duty as best they can. But that simply cannot account for the difference between 10,000 complaints and only 20 officers disciplined. It is too shockingly wide a gap to be explained in anything other than the obvious way: that officers get away scot-free, that members of the public are deterred from pursuing complaints, and that corruption and misbehaviour are swept under the nearest filing cabinet.

Every time that happens to a legitimate complaint, public faith in the police is undermined. Police forces cannot with one face encourage the public to come forward and help them in their often difficult task,

TAKE THIS

RUBBISH-

GET OFF!

P.45 TO

while with another refuse to countenance the possibility that some of their colleagues are either nasty, or rotten. And it is no excuse whatever to say that some of the bad officers are shuffled away to retire ment on health grounds. Far too much of that kind of evasion happens in the public service; it undermines accountability, and fails in the crucial objective of bolstering public esteem.

London (and the rest of Britain, indeed, but the problem is particularly acute in the capital) need police forces they can trust. Sir Paul Condon knows this, and knows that he needs to find a way of rooting out the 250-odd officers he believes are corrupt.

Obviously, tackling corruption matters more than common civility. But if any officer thinks it is acceptable to threaten to beat anyone up in a cell, whether or not they have committed an offence, he should be out of the force without ado. And be seen to be dismissed, too.

Post letters to Letters to the Editor

and include a daytime telephone number. Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

LETTERS

Now build on Kyoto

Sir: The climate change treaty hammered out at Kyoto was a political breakthrough. For the first time, a statutory global protocol mandates industrial nations to cut emissions of the six main greenhouse gases within a definite period. Countries like the US, the world's worst climate polluter and implacably opposed to any such agreement beforehand, were forced to compromise.

But it's not nearly enough. To stabilise climate change and sea-level rise, protect vital forest and other life systems along with heavily populated coastal regions, cuts of between 60 and 80 per cent must be achieved within 50 years.

Next year is critical, for ratification and first-step implementation. The two are linked. The US Senate is threatening to veto the treaty, arguing it will be bad for the economy and that newly industrialising countries, like China and India, should agree their own cuts.

The UK has another vital leadership role to play to overcome these hurdles, by demonstrating that cutting emissions people. Friends of the Earth, using EU economic forecasting models, has shown that meeting the UK's carbon dioxide reduction target of 20 per cent by 2010 can create up to 225,000 new jobs, through affordable domestic energy conservation measures, renewable supply (off-shore wind, wave, solar and combined heat and power) programmes, reducing traffic levels and building up a modern public transport network.

The Government must back the Road Traffic Reduction Bill before Parliament, and implement the policy, green taxation and public expenditure needed. As employment and profitable green technology export opportunities materialise for the UK and Europe, while emissions fall, the US and others will see it is worth following suit or risk losing market share and competitiveness. Essential and much tougher reduction targets will then be easier to negotiate at future climate summits, using Kyoto's legal foundation. CHARLES SECRETT Director, Friends of the Earth London N1

Sir. For the world to agree a single accord on anything as nebulous as climate is remarkable.



late-20th-century affirmation that colonialism rules.

emissions permits, the United States has badgered the rest of the world into accepting a new commodity for marketing, a new way for them to extend fi-

their greenhouse gases.

Shepperton, Middlesex

This is the season when we

receive family newsletters from

Unfortunately the result is a With the plan for trading in

nancial hegemony over economies struggling to emerge. Most third world countries

have difficulty developing their economics for the benefit of their own populations because they are struggling to pay off debts they have been seduced into by the developed nations. Now a new form of selling their seed com - their ability to develop industry - has been invented which will ensure that they will only continue to be able to develop at the rate the US allows, since the US will decide whether or not to dangle the carrot of more foreign exchange in return for

Which now is the evil empire? DAVID CHOAT

ing has been a model of its kind. Rightly he points the finger of blame at the multinationals and governments which are so largely responsible for failure to reach a more meaningful agreement in Kyoto ("Getting

> from our goal", 12 Decem-The best way to show our deep disgust is to hit them in the pocket. I am sure that I shall not be alone in boycotting products of Esso, Mobil and other members of the notorious Global Climate

warmer, but still a long way

JOHN GORDON

Labour vs 'Today'

Sir: Your report "Labour at war with Today" (13 December) on the exchange of letters between BCC Radio's John Barton and Labour's director of communications, David Hill, after the Harriet Harman inter-

view raises worrying questions. Not least, who is answerable to

A minister's salary, like the whole apparatus of government, of whatever party, is paid from the public purse: minister and government are answerable to the public on matters of public interest. This should have nothing to do with party officials.

Mr Barton, and all members of news media seeking official access to ministers on matters of policy, should bypass Mr Hill and go straight to the civil servant responsible. If this turns out to be one and the same person, as seems to be Peter Mandelson's aim. that person should be under obligation to act as civil, rather than party.

It is grotesque that a party official should take it upon himself to decide when government members should or should not appear to answer questions on policy. The party news management view is obviously that a press release be printed and read an air, commentators say "Oh, bow wonderful," and leave things at

GWYNNE POWER

We're no fat cats

Sir: Before your readers are swept along by any superficial comparison between barristers and hospital consultants or other professionals ("Lord Chancellor attacks legal aid fat-cats". 10 December), they might bear in mind that hospital consultants, out of their £70,000, do not have to pay their support staff, do not have to rent and service the hospital buildings and equipment do not have to market their services, do not have to buy and maintain efficient accounting systems to obtain payment, do not have to fund their own sickness insurance and pensions, and have

some security of employment.

The fact that a number of sidering the mathematics of very hard-working and exceptionally able barristers may obtain very high receipts in one calendar year does not alter these facts. I write as a barrister who gave up criminal work because the responsibility and anxiety involved were out of proportion to the general lev-

el of fees. EDWARD CROSS London WC1

Risks of life

Sir: Professor Margaret Brown (letter, 10 December) calls for wider debate about the mathematical skills we should be teaching our children to prepare them for citizenship in the next century.

A recent report prepared for the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (Children's Mathematical Understanding of Risk by Michael Barnett and Richard Noss) has shown how children are ill prepared for con-

risk, and how a richer mathematical curriculum which includes the study of probability might be exploited to educate children in the assessment of risk.

What a shame then, that the Government's drive for basic "numeracy" continues to displace ideas like probability from the primary mathematics curriculum in favour of basic numerical skills.

RoSPA recommends that risk assessment should be regarded as a life skill to help effective decision making to control risk in any context, whether it is eating a T-bone steak, having casual sex or crossing the road.

MARTIN GOMBERG Education Adviser The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents RICHARD NOSS Professor of Mathematics Education

University of London

Invitation to burgle

Sir. You report on "the simple" way to stop burglary" (8 December). However, local government has given the burglar the ability to target thousands of homes that people have to leave empty when out at work.

On the day refuse is collected, householders have to place a large wheeled bin on the pavement, and retrieve it after collection. We have to leave a large "please burgle me" sign on the pavement outside our homes until we return at the end of the working day.

The Government should make local authorities revert to the old system of the refuse collector bringing the bin out and returning it as part of the service. I BROOK Pontefract, West Yorkshire

Paper garden

Sir. Should you recycle? (report, 6 December). Not always. As a company involved in composting green organic waste it is a question we take seriously. Large centralised sites composting in excess of 30,000 tonnes a year are questionable spective. Smaller schemes, bearing in mind the proximity principle and working in conjunction with farmers, almost alvays make environmental sense.

Recycling of paper and glass in theory should make sense, but in practice will depend on the variables. The best way to deal with poor-quality paper and thin card such as cereal boxes is to compost them in the garden. They are an excellent source of carbon and mixed in with grass cuttings will improve the carbon. to nitrogen ratio, helping to provide a good compost.

CHARLIE TROUSDELL KPS Composting Services Haywards Heath, West Susser

Movable feast

Sir: I noticed with some astonishment this week that Sainsbury's are selling hot cross buns. Are they making the excellent point that Christmas is inseparable from Easter? Of does postmodernism mean that we now pick and mix the sym hols for our festivals? Next year perhaps we could have Maypole dancing on August Bank Holiday, and two minutes silence on 4 July. Dr NIGEL VAUX HALLIDAY Liss, Hampshire

'What are these tidings when they're at home?' 'You are going to have a baby, Mary,' he said



all round the world telling us what has happened to them in the last year, in remorselessly jolly detail. We may mock, but they do a good job as family bulletins. In fact, imagine how much easier the Christmas story would be to take in, if only the Virgin Mary had had the KINGTON time to sit down and send everyone a special Christmas ncwsletter ..

From Joseph and Mary and

new baby Jesus Hello, all, and what a year it's been! Probably the last time you heard from us was when we went off suddenly to Egypt but we're back again now and

dying to get back into the daily round. Egypt was one place we never thought we'd get to! I'm not saying it wasn't a nice change to be in Egypt though we never did get to see the pyramids! - but going all that way with the haby and just a donkey, well, it isn't really my idea of fun. Still, if the alternative is to have your baby taken into so-called "care" by King Herod, what can you do?

I do seem to be rattling on a bit, don't I? (Incidentally, you may have deduced by now that "I" is Mary and not Joseph! Poor old Joseph has cut his hand in an accident in the carpentry shop and can't write.) It all started this time last year when Joseph and I

were just another engaged couple, as I suppose we still arc. We were living with my mother's people in Nazareth and I was all alone at home one day, when there was a knock on the door and this enormous man came in. I was a bit scared but he seemed very nice, not a bit like the normal travelling salesman.

"Is the gentleman of the house in?" he said.

"No," I said. "he is round the back working on a pulpit for the Pharisees." I should say that Joseph has been doing very well with his woodwork this year even thought now he is kept busy on new cribs for the baby!

"Good," said the man.

"Fear not, for I have come to talk to you, O Mary, and I bring you good tidings."

'Get away!" I said, even though he spoke so posh, hecause you have to deal with these people sharpish. "What are these tidings when they are at home?"

You are going to have a haby, Mary," he said.

"Don't come near me!" | said, at which he smiled in a funny sort of way and said, "And it will be the son of God," and then he sort of vanished. Well, I told Joseph about this later, and we laughed and laughed about it. but then I was talking to my cousin Elizabeth (she has probably mentioned this in her

annual newsletter) and she had been approached by the same visitor who had told her that she was going to get pregnant too, and she did, even though she was miles too old to have a baby! So when I found I was going to have a baby, it all fitted together in a crazy sort of way, and anyway Joseph was too busy to be jealous because then we suddenly had to all go off to Bethlehem for this tax business. which I didn't understand my-

I wanted to stay with his folks while we were there but he said it would be difficult to explain to them why I was eight months pregnant and us

plained it.

self however often Joseph ex-

not married, and he would prefer it if we stayed in the inn. Of course, the inevitable happened and there was no room in the blasted inn, so we had to have the baby in the stable, with all the horrible exen and asses spreading their germs all over the place. I have never been so humiliated in my life (not till we had to leave at short notice for Egypt!) but things got a bit better when three charity workers or something like that called in with presents for the baby, and we were able to spend some gold

on better quarters - but really! He is a very good haby and has never cried once, which is a bit worrying. I suppose, but he smiles so nicely you can't

get cross with him. All sorts of people come to see him, so I suppose he really is special. but your own baby always is special anyway, so it makes no difference to me. He doesn't look a lot like Joseph, and I have no idea if he looks like God, but he is my baby and that is the main thing. He was already talking at six months, and the first thing he said was not "Mummy" or "Daddy", hut "There are many rooms in my father's mansion", or something like that. Wasn't that odd! I wonder what it meant?

Anyway, see you all soon! Joseph says "Hello!" and Baby Jesus says "Blessed are the meek." Bye for now!

17/COMMENT

Geoffrey Robinson need not, and should not, resign



DONALD **MACINTYRE** ON CURBING TAX AVOIDANCE

Have the Tories helped to save Geoffrey Robinson? The Opposition has defied the political folklore which says that by calling for a minister's resignation you make it much less likely that he will go. The more Peter Lilley and John Redwood, not to mention The Daily Telegraph, seek Mr Robinson's head on a charger, the less palatable would it be for Tony Blair to let him go, even if he wanted to. The stronger the pressure, the weaker it looks to yield to it.

This is nevertheless an episode that Blair could have done without. To have the complex financial affairs of the millionaire Paymaster General splashed across the front pages while you are cutting lone parents benefit, and your ministers are failing to make a very convincing case for doing so, is, on the face of it, about as nightmarish as things can get for a left-of-centre

Mr Robinson's colleagues have spent quite a lot of time over the past 24 hours explaining that he has become the subject of a press feeding frenzy. Certainly John Major damaged his government woefully by letting the Murdoch and Black press between them dictate what he did. But the Labour Party cannot escape all the blame for the frenzy, you can't, day after day in Opposition, fight to ensure that the private affairs of public figures are treated as a legitimate matter of public comment, and then complain when exactly the same happens when you are in government.

It has also been particularly unfortunate that Robinson, as the beneficiary of an offshore trust, is a Treasury minister, a big player in a department committed to doing something serious to reduce tax avoidance. If Robinson had been at - say - the Foreign Office, there might not have been such a fuss. It was unwise for the Treasury to put up Robinson, rather than Brown, to annonnce the Government's decision to transform the regime on tax-free savings. At the very least it is a serious embarrassment, rather as Harriet Harman's choice of a grammar school for her son was an embarrassment; it worries some arty stalwarts, infuriates others; and it exposes the leadership to the charge that it subscribes to the age-old parental principle of "Don't do as I do_Do as I sav.

The question is whether it is more than that. Blair has so far taken the firm view that nothing has so far come to light which suggests that it is. The Prime Minister likes Robinson - which isn't surprising because most people who deal with him do. His weekend interviews demonstrate that he isn't exactly a masterful champion of his own cause. But he has a lot of charm.

Robinson is a good minister. Blair, as well as Brown, trusts his judgement on quite

a wide range of issues. He was extremely helpful in ensuring a smooth passage for the windfall tax among the utilities. (On the windfall tax he had been a hawk, arguing that the Government could have reasonably taken more out of their profits than they actually did.) John Prescott has welcomed his close co-operation in the Public Finance Initiative. Finally every Labour government - almost always underpowered in its knowledge of business - needs its millionaire businessman. Wilson's was Harold Lever. And every government, of whatever

liant buccaneer or two. None of these, in themselves, are sufficient reasons for Robinson to stay. There are however, two rather better ones. The first is a paradox: Robinson's continued presence at the Treasury makes curbs on tax avoidance more, rather than less, likely. There is no reason for challenging his publicly expressed view over the weekend that he is personally arguing within the Treasury for further measures which might be to his personal detriment.

colour, would be the poorer without a bril-

But second, even if he wasn't making the case himself, the current fuss has at least ensured that his mere presence is a guarantor of action. This doesn't mean that Gordon Brown isn't deadly serious about fulfilling his Green Budget pledge to tighten up on avoidance. There is no reason why one-off capital sums, as well as regular income, received by British citizens from offshore trusts shouldn't be taxed. But it won't be easy; the law is desperately complex and there are big vested interests to take on here.

To the scams in urgent need of abolition catalogued here yesterday by Polly Toynbee, I would add just one: widespread avoidance of inheritance tax by the rich. "Billions of pounds", said a Labour document before the election, "are held in trusts principally for tax avoidance". Just imagine the bedlam that would greet Brown on Budget Day next March, if with Robinson at his side, he announced that the Government still had no firm plans to start recouping it.

The other is that whatever else Robinson has done, his financial dealings appear to have been irrelevant to his conduct as a minister. One of the reasons why the Opposition is on such weak ground is its own record of protecting politicians - such as Neil Hamilton and, for too long, Jonathan Aitken - whose private conduct was relevant to their political life. By contrast they have not yet been able to show that Robinson's financial affairs have affected his conduct as a minister.

There is an important caveat Robinson's explanation has so far been rather like the answer given by Norman Lamont when, more than a decade ago, in very different circumstances, he was pressed to account for his famous black eye: "complicated but innocent". If anything came to light which fatally undermined that, and therefore his fitness to be a minister, Blair has left himself just enough room to demand his resignation. Robinson would certainly have done better to disclose more from the first - about the date of the trust's formation and its subsequent share dealings - than he did when its existence first came to light. His original reticence is one of the reasons why the affair has damaged the image of a very image-conscious government. But on the known information, he has done nothing illegal as a private citizen and nothing improper as a minister. Unless that picture alters Blair is right to keep him.

Farmers should look to customers rather than politicians



ANDREAS WHITTAM SMITH FARMING THE **TAXPAYERS**

Should we feel sorry for the beef farmers? We would not sympathise with a pharmaceutical company if it put a faulty medicine on to the market; we would be angry. But in the topsy-turvy world of agriculture, it is the producers who are angry and the customers who are sorry.

In many moods I don't have much regard for the beef farmers. We subsidise them in more ways than we know. Whenever we go shopping and buy anything upon which VAT is levied. say, a CD player at Dixons, a part of the tax we have paid goes, via a European budget. into the pockets of farmers.

Then, when we visit the butcher's shop, we are paying, without realising it. prices that are far higher than they need he. There is a steep wall of high tariffs around the European beef market. Even in the protected North American market. beef prices are 20 per cent lower than they are here - as anybody who has been to a restaurant in the United States recently will have noticed. If there were free trade in beef, it wouldn't be highly priced Irish supplies that angry farmers would be throwing into the sea, it would be Australian beef, undercutting British prices by some 40 per cent or so.

I will grant that farmers' inmes are quite volatile. But if you look at the accounts of the nation's cattle and sheep farms, you find that last year an average farmer had a revenue of about £48,000 from a market that is rigged in the farmer's favour, and in addition received subsidies totalling £27.000 from taxpayers. From these receipts of £75,000, the livestock farmer had to meet costs of some £57,000, leaving £18,000 net farm income. If you go back 10 years, and adjust for inflation, you find that the long-term trend of farm incomes has been stable.

Let us be clear what this means for a group that speaks the language of dependency much more vociferously than any lone parent, or any out-ofwork youngster or disabled



person. Unlike millions of other people, livestock farmers have

Yet listen to what they say. Sir David Naish, the chairman of the National Farmers Union, goes to speak to a group of farmers in the Midlands and feels that he must tell then a truth "which we cannot ignore". What is this revelation? "That consumers are allpowerful, and our future debuy what we produce". Surely, farming is the only business activity in the land where the people involved have to be refed that they do in fact have customers.

"The Government are killing our industry," shouted a protesting farmer recently. No. it is the other way round. Given the risks to health which BSE poses, it is the farming industry which has been trying to kill

Broadly, the message from the farming community is: "whatever happens, you, the taxpaver, must look after us and keep us in business by one means or another". Sir David Naish even complains that farmers receive no reward for activities such as landscape management and environmental enhancement. Show me the enhancement. We are still losing hedgerows. And have not set-aside payments been a re-

How the British coal-miners work, have income, have must wish they were as well treated as British farmers. When the pound sterling commands a high rate of exchange against other currencies, the farmers demand compensation and, sooner or later, they obtain it. When the same exchange rate has the effect of pricing British coal out of foreign markets, there is no help. The Government could dispends upon their willingness to tort the energy market to prevent natural gas from driving coal out of power stations, but it hardly lifts a finger. Coal-

miners will go on losing their

continue to fix agricultural

Will they go on doing so?

ward for doing exactly nothing?

markets for the benefit of farmers.

Beef farmers are entitled to have their doubts. Perhaps they are not, in the end, going to avoid the day of reckoning which shipbuilding workers, steel workers, and coal miners have confronted, long delayed though it has been. Beef consumption per head has been dropping since the early Eighties, long before the BSE crisis. A switch to convenience foods has reduced demand; health considerations have been a negative factor for many years: and poultry has become relatively much cheaper. Now the downward trend in demand is even steeper.

At the same time, the methods which European governments have used up to now to take surplus supply off the market may no longer be effective. New rules for world trading make it more difficult than it once was to subsidise exports to the Middle East and elsewhere. It is also becoming harder to maintain high tariff protection of the European market. Governments can put excess beef into cold storage and let a beef mountain build up again, but they are not enthusiastic about doing this at a time when public expenditure

This is why European governments are beginning to wonder whether they should adopt a radically different policy. Instead of supporting beef prices in order to protect farmers' incomes, they would let prices drop by 35 per cent, or whatever is required to equate with

laughtered in

numbers to reduce the size of

herds, but public opinion is

likely to be hostile to such

barbarity.

the world price, and pay compensation direct for the loss of income. But the British Government, for one, has said that it could not meet the whole bill. In other words, without a recovery in domestic demand, beef farmers are in real danger.

One way of seeing the threat is to consider what would be the consequences of a scenario in which agriculture was not a highly protected and subsidised activity. British dairy farmers would survive, and probably build up a good export trade in milk and milk products. The substantial amount of beef that is tightly constrained. Calves comes from dairy herds would scale cereal production would remain profitable.

What would disappear would be livestock-rearing in the hills, and the way of life that goes with it. Unfortunate indeed. But then, there is no more tin-mining in Cornwall, or shipbuilding in Birkenhead, or cotton-spinning in Bolton. Occupations was and wane.

It is the natural order of things. Farmers should understand,

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Decoding the enigma of the sudden emergence of the male torso



LOUISE JURY NAKED TRUTH

He stands there on bus shelters and advertising hoardings, with his finely-toned pees and his naked washboard stomach. Yves St Laurent man as the epitome of masculine beauty.

In the Diet Coke break advert, women crowd round the window for their morning fix of watching the hunky specimen of working labourer on the building site below.

John Menzies newsagents report that Street Boys, its calendar of attractive boys, is outselling its popular girlic title. Girls, Girls, Girls, by two to one. Simon Smith, of the calendar manufacturer Scandecor, reports that its Power of Man calendar of men in jeans and beachwear outsells any of its girlie rivals.

The naked male torso is everywhere. In the past, men's magazines had pictures of heau-

tiful women and women's magazines had pictures of beautiful women. No one had beautiful men. But when The Face and Arena imported an interest in style and clothes from gay culture into the Eighties mainstream, man as model finally began to make it into the limelight. Today, he is as likely to be decorating the hoardings as any of his female counterparts.

"I think there has been a dawning realisation that men's hodies can be sexy too," says Richard Myers, a creative director at Saatchi & Saatchi advertising agency.

The Nineties male, of course, is a fitter class of manhood than his Sixties or Seventies predecessor. The gvm can be seen clearly etched across his chest. Even better, the muscles are the result of his mountain cycling or soccer-playing (not quite so narcissistic as sweating away on the weights).

So the office slob now faces the tyranny of comparison with Mr YSL and Messieurs January to December. That's a lot to live up to. There is some evidence that men are feeling the pressure. Around one in 10 victims of anorexia and bulimia is male, according to the Eating Disorders Association. Just as women have faced images of stunning supermodels for generations, the new wave of glossy

magazines for men is engendering a similar kind of paranoia. "There is evidence that the more you are surrounded by pictures like that the more unhappy you are with yourself." says Dr Jill Welbourne, a specialist in eating disorders.

But, boys, worry not! Please don't take it seriously. Young women just want a giggle, Simon Smith said he certainly thought most women bought their calendars for their daughters or other women for a laugh. "It's done very tongue in cheek." Mary-Ann Stephenson, of

the Fawcett Society, the women's equality campaigners, says more widespread images of semi-clad men are one consequence of women's greater financial independence. 'As women without children have more money today, they can spend it on what they want," she says. More advertisements are aimed at women because they are buying for themselves and not just for the household. Girl power has won women better jobs, more cash and a cheering array of beef-

cake for utilization. But the prevalence of sexy male imagery is also a result of a freer society. "Women have become more upfront about their sexuality," she says, "It used to be said that women didn't like looking at men's bod-



ies because they're much more interested in their personalities. Perhaps women thought it was a bit shallow to say that women liked looking at nice men. There has been a change from that," In real life, women are not necessarily looking for men to be a provider. "In your fantasy world, perhaps you don't need a millionaire, you want a sexual object," she suggests. Of course, not all these ads

are aimed at women. Andy Medhurst, a media studies lecnurer at Sussex University, points out it is much more acceptable these days even for straight men to express an interest in clothes and fashion and the book. The fascists of Italy and Germany in the 1930s made much of the cult

of the beautiful young male body, notes Dr Ruth Ben-Ghiat, a cultural historian at Fordham University in the US. "It's about the man as conqueror and it's about discipline. If you have a finely-runed body it's a sign that you're in control of yourself. Mussolini would strip off his shift at every opportunity to show his muscles. Such images are very exclusionary to women, she says, to

the point of misogyny. Their preponderance today may even be an attempt to reassert male power, "There's been a lot of disappointment among males at the dawn of feminism and women in the workplace and women becoming fit themselves. Right now there are also a lot of ads that show women as being strong sporty figures - that must be very threatening for men."

Curiously, many women would rather see men fully dressed; though men raised on the promising allure of the long leg and the plunging neckline may find this hard to believe. Fiona Melntosh, editor of Compuny magazine for twentysomething women, is currently sifting the candidates for its 50 most eligible bachelors awards. They are all being photographed with their clothes most definitely on. "Guys in underpants don't do anything for me," she says. "I'd much rather

see a guy in what he would wear normally, to show his sense of Oliver James, author of Britain on the Couch, says if

women really were buying pictures of naked men in calendars and magazines, this would be an intriguing shift. All attempts at selling women porn have failed. and the female sex has never hefore been turned on by isolated bits of bodies as men are. Could this be sign of a significant change?

"Over the next 50 years, we're going to find out whether given unconstrained free choice, women start behaving like men. Will they start shagging for the sake of a shag rather than for a relationship?" Probably not. I think we may

be misreading the signs. Much has been made of The Full Monty, the story of six jobless steelworkers who turn strippers. Its success has exceeded even that of Four Weddings und a Funeral. But the true pleasure of The Full Monty has nothing to do with the final striptease. It is a classic male bonding movie, an overcoming-adversity-with-gritty-British-humour film. Its success has nothing to do with the attraction of men getting their kit off. I mean, they actually look rather silly at the end, don't

Nicholas Polunin

Nicholas Polunin, botanist and environmentalist: born Checkendon, Oxfordshire 26 June 1909; Fielding Curator and Keeper of the University Herbaria, Oxford, and University Demonstrator and Lecturer in Botany 1939-47; Macdonald Professor of Botany, McGill University, Canada 1947-52: Founding Editor, Environmental Conservation 1974-95; CBE 1976; Co-Editor, Environmen Challenges 1993-97; married 1939 Helen Lovat Fraser (died 1973; one son; marriage dissolved 1947), 1948 Helen Eugenie Campbell (two sons, one daughter); died Geneva 8 December 1997.

Nicholas Polunin was one of the world's foremost and most ardent champions of environmental conservation as well as a distinguished botanist, writer and explorer. From the mid-1960s he was in the vanguard of promoting the public appreciation and maintenance of the global biosphere, which he did ceaselessly until just days before his death.

In his scientific travels While an an undergraduate and research in the far North, Africa and the Middle East, he became aware of the deteriorating conditions of the global environment, which he attributed to over-population, over-consumption, and overpollution, which were leading to ever more serious global environmental deterioration. This caused him in 1966 to abandon The Isle of Auks (1932). his further Arctic research and During further botanical exwriting to devote himself to ad-

dressing global problems. His tireless devotion to nature in its own right has since set the standard of environmental ethics for ecologists, environmentalists, and others throughout the world. He mainland and Greenland - he period 1971 to 1990 that each founded magazines on ecologically grounded conservation questions, wrote books examining environmental problems

Foundation for Environmental Herbaria at Oxford; he was al-mental Future". 1972: "Growth Conservation which organised

four international conferences. Polunin was born in Checkendon, England in 1909 into an artistic-theatrical background: his father Vladimir Polunin of Botany at McGill Universiwas a Russian-born forester turned artist who had worked as a designer for Diaghilev - Picasso had painted sets for him - while his mother Elizabeth was another artist. His two sibacademic careers, Oleg (who is now dead) in botany and plant geography, and Ivan (who lives in Singapore) in medical anthropology.

Polunin received his formal training at Christ Church, Oxford, from where he graduated in 1932 with First Class Honours in Botany and Ecology, at Yale University, where he received his MSc in 1934, and again at DSc 1942). His early scholarly activities were devoted to plant of political unrest. geography with emphasis on the flora of Spitsbergen, Lapland, Greenland, Iceland, Labrador, and various islands of the Canadian eastern arctic.

at Oxford he had taken part in a number of expeditions, which he turned into books. The first was a voyage on the White Sea, described in Russian Waters (1931, with a foreword by year he studied the plant life on Akpatok Island in the Hudson Strait, which he wrote about in

olorations in the Thirties in Arctic Canada, Greenland, Iceland and Lapland he identified various arctic plants new to science and established botanical evidence for Viking movements ternational Conferences on Enbetween the North American was an excellent dog-sledge

Demonstrator and Lecturer in academia and government and solutions, and set up the Botany, and Keeper of the world-wide: "The Environ-

ready Senior Research Fellow and Tutor in Botany at New College. Eight years later, prompt-

ed by the break-up of his first marriage, he took up the Chair ty, Montreal.

It was while here in 1948 that he went as a botanist on the Canadian Arctic Survey which discovered in the Foxe Basin the last major islands to be added Island, Prince Charles Island (Prince Charles was born the same year) and Foley Island. The trip is recounted in *Arctic* Unfolding (1949).

After a stint at Yale Unihelped to establish both the University of Baghdad in Iraq (1956-58) and the University of Ife in Ibadan, Nigeria (1962-66), with special responsibility for Oxford (MA and DPhil 1935; their faculties of science. On both occasions he left because

He had earlier served as research project director of the United States Air Force Floating Ice Island project in the Arctic Ocean and as scientific adviser to the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

In 1967 he founded the scholarly journal Biological Conservation which he then edited until 1974. In that year he founded the quarterly jour-John Buchan). The following nal Environmental Conservation, which aimed to be useful for influencing government policy. He quickly built it up to become the recognised leader in its field and edited it until 1995. at which point his son Nicholas, a professor of marine biology,

took over.

Polunin also organised and sponsored four influential Invironmental Future during the time brought together for fruitful interaction the leading fig-In 1939 he was appointed ures in the field from both

Without Ecodisasters?", 1980; "Maintainance of the Biosphere", 1990; "Surviving with the Biosphere*, 1943.

In 1975, with assistance from the World Conservation Union and the World Wide Fund for Nature, Polunin founded, and directed until his death, the Foundation for Environmental Conservation (Geneva), which among other achievements has lings also pursued distinguished to the world's map: Air Force encouraged and supported numerous activities and publications in its field; and has awarded related cash prizes for demonstrated excellence. In 1983 he was instrumental

in establishing the World Counversity (1952-55), Polunin cil for the Biosphere (Geneva). which promoted public recognition of the growing environmental threats in the world, one of whose project since 1991 has been to promote World Biosphere Day, now celebrated world-wide each autumnal equinox. And in 1988 he helped establish the International Vernadsky Foundation and its associated Centre for World Biosphere Studies in Pushchino. Russia. Vernadsky was a turn-of-the-century Russian geologist who was among the first to recognise the interaction between the non-living and living components of the globe, thereby laying the foundation for the modern environmental

> Numerous technical articles and monographs resulted from these efforts. Prominent among his earlier scientific works are Botany of the Canadian Eastern Arctic (three volumes, 1940-48) and the authoritative Circumpolar Arctic Flora (1959). His Introduction to Plant Geography and Some Related Sciences (1960) became the standard text in the field and has been translated into a number of languages, All told, Polunin has authored or edited numerous scholarly books and is as well the author of more than 500 scien-

Polunin provided inspiration through his many published works to generations of ecologists and other biological cientists. Equally important, he was always willing to offer knowledgeable, wise, and supportive counsel to generations of young scholars on a personal basis, sharing not only scientific information and imaginative insights but also his infectious enthusiasm.

Through his concerted eftoris, numerous environmental conservationists, often from obscure institutions around the world, were afforded the opportunity to publish their findings in his journals and edited volumes. In short, by devoting his enormous energies to environmental conservation long before the need for such efforts became widely recognised, Polunin set the stage for, and conappreciation for the need for balancing human needs with those of the other living things on earth. In 1987 he was awarded the United Nations Environment Programme's International Sasakawa Environment Prize, the most prestigious environmental prize available. In 1991 he was placed on the United Nations Global 500 Roll of Honour.

Polunin was tall and thin and had boundless energy. He had impeccable manners, great warmth, empathy and dignity. His large office, with two huge desks, always looked like a disaster area, containing immense piles of paper that only he could deal with, but which somehow or other were immensely orderly.

In 1948, he married his second wife. Helen Eugenie Campbell; they moved to Geneva in 1959, Nicholas Polunin's vision, aspirations, and energies were shared by his wife, whose loving support and tireless assistance over the years be was always ready to acknowledge.



Claude Dusaidi

Claude Dusaidi, political activist: born Byumba, (two daughters); died Johannesburg 29 November

To many, the slaughter in Rwanda in 1994 was an outburst of tribal violence, a society run amok. But these were convenient descriptions only and hid a greater truth, for here was the direst of all human situations - for renewal, but American the planned and systematic diplomats told Dusaidi that elimination of a people. With the death of Claude Dusaidi, budgets, wanted the peackeenhistory has lost a precious wit- ers in Rwanda to pull out altoness to the circumstances of this tragic event.

In the weeks before the genocide began, Dusaidi, a former schoolteacher who became a political activist, was lobbying at the United Nations in New York, trying to alert ambassadors that the Rwandan peace agreement which UN peace-

about to unravel. In meeting after meeting he tirelessly warned was rearming and was training militia.

Dusaidi soon discovered that Bosnia took up most of the Security Council's time. He knew too how dissipated the enthusiasm for UN peacekeeping was after the Somalia debacle. In the first week of April 1994, the mandate for the peacekeeping force in Rwanda was up Washington, worried about UN gether.

Dusaidi said later that he believed the Security Council failed to grasp the principle involved - that a tyranny ruled Rwanda and the fragile peace which the peacekeepers were to monitor was Rwanda's last chance to create democracy.

The problems of his country had first changed the course of



Dusaidi: tireless warnings

Claude Dusaidi's life in 1959 when, aged eight, he had fled with his family across the border to Uganda after a bloody revolution in which Hutus had massacred thousands of Tutsi. He grew up in a refugee camp and the local school was provided by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Dusaidi was the son of a civil servant, and had a considerable

University, where he specialised in French and English literature. He graduated with honours in 1976. After working as a highschool teacher, he was one of the first Rwandan refugees to win a scholarship to Canada to study for a masters degree.

Intending to obtain a doctorate he went to York University in Toronto, but left to organise the Canadian branch of the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF). The RPF was created by exile Rwandans from communities in Africa, Europe and North America and was dedicated to the return of up to one million Tutsi exiles to Rwanda and the creation of a democratic state. Dusaidi hecame a magnet for other young exiles

in Canada. In October 1990 the RPF army invaded Rwanda. There news. was a three-year civil war. In Au-

scholarship, sponsored by UN- mation of a transitional gov- ambassadors as they left the and scale - up to a million peo- Council, had it decided on renda's Makerere ernment in which all parties, building His desperate pleas for ple were killed in a hundred inforcements for the neaceincluding the RPF, would be eral election. Dusaidi, appointed the RPF's North ysed and its first decision was to American representative, was pull out the peacekeepers. sent to New York to lobby the international community.

But even while the August 1993 peace agreement was negotiated, the Hutu extremists in Kigali were secretly preparing activists, along with many thoua genocide of the Tutsi. When it began on 6 April 1994 Dusaidi was at the UN. For the first few weeks he remained convinced that the council would send re- relation to Rwanda in an offiinforcements. He had been unable to obtain a full UN pass he did not represent a government - and he was prevented from sitting in the lobby of the reversed its earlier decision and Security Council to wait for

gust 1993 a peace treaty was the public areas of the secre- cide would break the world's armed peacekeepers if not for

military action fell on deaf ears. represented. A small force of He was outspoken but totally UN peacekeepers would help committed and he earned the prepare the ground for a gen-respect of UN staff and diplomats. But the council was paral-

> Dusaidi knew that in the first 24 hours all the opposition to the regime was wiped out everyone who had spoken up for democracy and all human-rights sands of civilians. There was no doubt in Dusaidi's mind that this was genocide and he was the first person to use the word in cial document, in an RPF press release on 12 April 1994.

This was some weeks before the Security Council belatedly decided on 17 May to mandate 5,500 troops for Rwanda. The days. A third were children. There was little Dusaidi

could do and he later suffered

the indignity of seeing a representative of the genocidal "interim government" address the council. As terrible for him was the subsequent global outpouring of sympathy for the Hutus who fled the country. many of whom had helped carry out genocide. In July, when the RPF finally

took Kigali, the country was in ruins. A few weeks ago I interviewed him there and we talked at length about the events of 1994. He hoped that one day someone would be held to account for the genocide and not just those who had organised it or those who carried out the killings. Had the peacekeepers taken forceful action, he said, then the militia would have So he sat, day after day, in killing continued and the geno-fled. What was the point of

gift for languages; he won a signed which promised the for- tariat building and confronted most atrocious records in speed this? As for the Security keepers, the genocide could have been prevented.

Looking to the future, he was amazingly optimistic. A power in the land, he was now political adviser to the Vice-President, Paul Kagame, the leader of the RPF. He was respected and admired and determined as ever. The aim was to create a state that was better than the one before and to . end forever the ethnic divide. They had come too far and suffered too much to believe

otherwise. In October Dusaidi had seemed weighed down with problems, but he was already ill. He was admitted to hospital in Kigali in November and flown to South Africa where he died in Johannesburg from kidney failure. It was yet one more tragedy, said a colleague, to add 🎒 to all the others.

- Linda Melvern

BIRTHS, **MARRIAGES** & DEATHS

DEATHS

HUMPHRIES: Alan, OBE, First Head-master of the British School of Brussels, died on 8 December 1997 in Spain where he has been cremated. Friends and colleagues will be wel-ounce at a reunion in remembrance of Alan at Furthinghoe Village Hall, near Brackley, Northamptonshire on 2 January 1998, Details from 01295 710335.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS may be tele-phoned to 0771-293 2012 or faxed to phones to 677-273 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £6.50

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS
The Priese of Wales, President, Business in the Community, Itoda a community at \$1 James \(^1\) Patient with horses of leaders who attended his Automn 1947. "Section to Belevious" Programme. The Princess Royal, Patron, the Burley frust, victs Her Majestr's Prison Woodhall, Millom Keynes, Buckingshamishner, as President. The Princew Royal Time for Cartery, visits Hertfordshire Cartery, Courte Stakling; Yard, Ware, Hertfordshire, open Parairier's School Sports Centre, Gardon, near Wattord, Hertfordshire; and as President, Soot the Children Fund, attends the Festival of Trees Gais Danner, Natural History Museum, Lumben \$M'. The Duke of Glouvester attends a Procentation of The Story of Caristinas, in and of Druge in School Helpings and the Wassey Children's Hawyer Spanze, Lundon Wi The Duchess of Glouvester, Patron, Parkinson's Disease Seatery, attenda christinas Card Concern at & Marcherone Marish Church, Marylebone Royal, London Will, Princess Alexanders attends "Top to the World".

a Christinas calebration, at the Royal Albert Hall.

Birthdays Mr Benny Andersson, singer with Abba, 51; Ms Anne Begg MR 42; Mr Michael Blackburn, chief executive. Halifax Building Society. 56; Mr Norman Blamey, painter, 83; Sir Michael Carlisle, chairman, Com-munity Health Sheffield NHS Trust. 68; Mr Arthur C. Clarke, science fact and fiction writer, 80; Mrs Myrella Cohen QC, former circuit judge, 70; Professor Bernard Crick, political don and biographer, 68; The Hon Peter Dickinson, author, 70; Miss Jacque line Duncan, principal, Inchbald Schools of Design and Fine Arts, 66; Mr Christopher Ellison, actor, 51; Mr Joel Garner, cricketer, 45; Mr Robert Gunn, former chairman of Boots, 72; Mr Tony Hicks, rock guitarist, 52; Sir Jasper Hollom, former Deputy Governor. Bank of England, 80; Miss Stephanie Lawrence, singer, 44; Lord Mottistone, former Lord-Lieutenant and Governor of the Isle of Wight. 77; Lieut-Gen Sir David Scott-Barrett, 75; Mr Rodion Shehedrin, composer, 65; Mr Graham Stevenson, Yorkshire and England cricketer, 42: Miss Liv Ullmann, actress, 59: Mr William Whatley, former trade union official, 75; Lieut-

Anniversaries

Births: Catherine of Aragon, first queen of Henry VIII, 1485; Field Marshal Gebhard Leberecht von Blucher, Prussian military commander. 1742; Jane Austen, novelist, 1775: Zoltan Kodaly, composer, 1882: Sir John (Jack) Hobbs, cricketer, 1882; Sir Noel Pierce Coward. playwright, actor and composer, 1889; Dr Margaret Mead, anthro-

Gen Sir Roger Wheeler, Commander-in-Chief. Land Command, 56.

pologist, 1901. Deaths: Pepin II. leader of the Franks, 714; James Grainger, army surgeon and poet, 1766; Wilhelm Grimm, philologist and folklorist, 1859; Charles-Camille Saint-Sacus, composer, 1921; Alton Glenn Miller, dance band leader, lost after an air flight, 1944; William Somerset Maugham, novelist, 1965. On this day: Oliver Cromwell became Lord Protector, 1653; the "Boston Tea Party" took place, 1773; the Charlotte Jane, first immigrant ship for the Canterbury settlement in New Zealand, arrived at Lyttelton, 1850: synthetic diamonds were first pro-duced by Professor H.T. Hall at the GEC Laboratories, US. 1954. Today is the Feast Day of St Adelaide, St Ado, St Albina, Saints Ananiah, Azariah & Mishael (Shadrach, Meshach and Abedrego) and St Irenion.

Lectures Victoria and Albert Museum: Katharine Hugh. "Scenes from the Life of the Virgin in Late Medieval Art , 2.30pm. Tate Gallery: Sarah O'Brien Twohig, "William Blake". Ipm. National Portrait Gallery: David King, "To Paradise by Way of Kensal Green: G.K. Chesterton",

Luncheons

Local Government Group

for Europe Baroness Farrington and Lord Witty were guest speakers to mark the inauguration of the Local Government Group for Europe vesterday, followed by a functionn as guests of the London Office of the European

LAW REPORT: 16 DECEMBER 1997

Council was not obliged to compensate landowner

Where planning consents were found to have been improperly granted by a council because of blas on the part of councillors, the

council was entitled to apply to have the consents quashed by way of judicial review, and was not obliged to use its powers under the Town and Country Planning Act. 1990 to revoke the consents, thus entitling the landowner to claim compensation.

Regina v Bassetlaw District Council. ev parte Oxby, Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Hobbouse, Lord Justice Millett and Lord Justice Otton) II December 1997

The Court of Appeal allowed the appeal of Graham Oxby found a failure on the part of against the refusal of his application for judicial review by interest on certain occasions. It way of certiorari to quash two recommended that the counplanning decisions of the Bas- cil exercise its powers under setlaw District Council, by section 97 of the Town and which planning consent had Country Planning Act 1990 to been granted to Mr and Mrs revoke the improperly granted Howcoft for the development planning consents. Advice was

for domestic housing of two sought from leading counsel, respondent, the council, Howplots of agricultural land owned by them.

The Howcrofts had entered into a joint venture agreement with a Mr Concy, by which he had agreed to apply for planning permissions to develop their land. The applications were granted, in each case against the advice of the council's officers. Subsequent in- and Resources Committee, vestigations revealed contacts was dismissed by Mr Justice or associations between Mr Coney and members of the council, in particular with the two members responsible for the granting of the Howerofts' applications.

The council ordered an independent enquiry, which some councillors to disclose an

who advised that section 97 should not be invoked, but that an application should be made for judicial review of the decisions with a view to their being declared illegal and void on the ground of bias. The application, which was made by Mr Oxby as leader of the council and chairman of its Policy

David Mole QC and Paul Brown (Sharpe Pritchards for Mr Only) Alun Alesbury (Eversheds) for Mr and Mrs Howernft

Popplewell.

Lord Justice Hobbouse said that three points had been relied on on behalf of the Howcrofts, who appeared as interested third parties. The first concerned Mr Oxby's locus standi to make the application. The peculiarity of the present case was that the applicant. Mr Oxby, was in effect acting as a representative of the the council to adopt.

ever, a convenient and appropriate course had been adopted in a similar case, R v Port Talbor Borough Council, ex namely that as the council could not be both applicant and respondent, the leader of the council had the necessary standing.

The second point was that

the council should have sought the alternative remedy available to them under section 97 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and revoked the planning consents. That would have given the Howerotts the right to apply under section 107 of the Act for substantial compensation. The council submitted that it would have been a dereliction of duty to not to have sought to have the consents set aside, but to have chosen to revoke them and pay compensation. That was a legitimate and proper attitude for compensation.

The Howerofts' third point was that the application should fail on grounds of delay. The judgment in R v Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, ex p Jones [1988] 2 All ER 207, pA [1997] 3 WLR 776 provided valuable guidance on the question. The critical factor in the present case was whether the Howerofts would be prejudiced by the granting of the relief sought. They could, however, have no legitimate grievance on being deprived of the benefit of planning consents which should never have

been granted, Mr Oxby had established what was necessary to demonstrate that the two decisions in question had been improperly arrived at. Where it had been clearly shown that a planning consent had been improperly granted, then it should be declared void and it was not appropriate that the council should be required to pay.

– Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister

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FINANCIAL JOURNAL OF THE YEAR

Acer of Taiwan to create 1,000 jobs in Wales despite row over 'poaching' between regions

The Government yesterday attacked what it claimed were 'wild and unsubstantiated allegations' that Wales was engaged in turf wars with English regions to poach inward investment projects.

The outspoken comments, by Ron Davies, the Weish Secretary, came as a Taiwanese computer giant announced plans to create 1,000 jobs near Cardiff.

Chris Godsmark, Business
Correspondent, reports

Acer, which claims to be the world's thirdlargest manufacturer of personal computers, has chosen a 20 hectare site on the M4 corridor east of Cardiff to build a factory making colour monitors.

The company said it would invest £25m at the plant over five years in two phases and would inject £5m of working capital. It would ultimately have capacity to make 2 million monitors a year. Work on the first stage in the project would start in January, with the first monitors rolling off production lines in August.

Acer had examined a location north of Newcastle, and a site near its existing operations in the Netherlands, but insisted the subsidy package on offer in Wales was not the main reason for choosing Cardiff. It pointed to the site's two-hour driving distance from Heathrow Airport and the fact that some of the UK's leading plastics suppliers were located in a 10-mile radius of nearby Newport.

Mr Davies said the project brought to an end "a great deal of unhelpful and inaccurate speculation about Acer's intentions and allegations that we have "poached the project from other parts of Britain".

However, both Mr Davies and the Welsh Development Agency (WDA) refused to reveal the level of state aid offered to Acer. The WDA is building the factory, which will be leased to Acer, reducing the cost and risk for the company. Other help includes work to create approach roads and spending on training for employees.

plovees. The row over subsidies exploded in

October when Sir George Russell, chairman of the Northern Development Company, publicly accused the Welsh Development Agency and the Welsh Office of poaching investment projects. Animosity intensified last year when Wales was picked over Tyneside by Lucky Goldstar of Korea for its £1.6bn investment programme.

Sir George, who could not be contacted yesterday, told the North East Chamber of Commerce that William Hague, the former Welsh Secretary, had "gazumped" ministerial colleagues and accused him of a "blatant disregard" of the rules

Following the speech, some Tyneside MPs had joined the row, claiming the Welsh Development Agency had been able to gazump any aid package offered to Acer in the North-east.

It emerged last night that the Cardiff site should have been eligible for smaller grants than Tyneside because, according to the regional assistance rules, it was considered to be in a less deprived area. Unlike the Tyneside site, the Welsh location does not qualify for the highest level of regional assistance grants.

Though he did not name Sir George, Mr Davies yesterday said he was glad the project had not been damaged by "wild and unsubstantiated allegations by some organisations and individuals". Rhodri Morgan, MP for Cardiff West, went further, accusing Sir George of acting in an "aggressive and unprofessional manner".

The Welsh Development Agency added that it had received complaints from several companies which had already invested in Wales about the arguments, which were damaging the UK's prospects for attracting future funds.

Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, has attempted to end the gazumping row by suggesting the Department of Trade and Industry should act as a clearing house for all inward investment projects. The issue is still being discussed by ministers

Meanwhile, Honda unveiled plans to invest a further £60m at its Swindon plant in preparation for a new version of the Civic model and the replacement next year for the Accord saloon range. The cash, which brings to £460m the amount invested so far, would create 400 new jobs, taking the total workforce to 3,000.

Inward investment – How the regions have fared 2,000 2,000 £530m 3,300 Chunghwa **NORTH EAST** 1,800 1,600 £1.2bn 3,200 £450m Korea **EAST MIDLANDS** £784m £700m 1,000 **WEST MIDLANDS** FIRST COUNTRY MONEY LOSS COUNTRY MONEY £1.7bn **SOUTH WEST** COUNTRY MONEY Source:DTI:Honda

MFI revamp leaves up to 1,000 jobs at risk

MFI Furniture, the kitchens and bedrooms group, is to cut several hundred jobs over the next 18 months in an attempt to improve efficiency. The company plans to close the in-store warehouses at its 180 branches and replace them with 12 larger warehouses which will deliver goods directly to customer's homes.

Up to 1,000 jobs are at risk at the instore warehouses, though MFI said many staff would be re-deployed at the new home delivery centres. Some jobs at the group's head office in Colindale, north London, have already gone and more may be cut

MFI is making the changes to reduce costs and make its delivery system more efficient. It will sub-let the in-store warehouses space to other retailers.

The new efficiency programme will also see all MFI stores converted to its MFI Homeworks format by mid-1998. These include a broader range of household goods such as kitchenware and textiles. Some 15 per cent of product lines will be stripped out with ranges such as upholstery and cheaper cabinet furniture are under review. Instead the stores will focus more on higher margins kitchens and bedrooms which it manufactures itself.

John Randall, chief executive, said:
"The business is going through a process
of major change and we aim to improve
retail profits and focus on areas of potential growth."

He was speaking as MF1 announced an 8 per cent increase in first-half pretax profits to £35.4m. The company said it had only experienced a windfall factor boost to sales in the North-east of England, following the flotation of Northern Rock earlier this year. But it said customers were trading up to more expensive kitchens. Its average kitchen sale is now over £2,000, excluding fitting costs.

First-half figures were affected by the £3.5m costs associated with closing its German operations this year and increased losses in France due to the weak economy. The company said the key to its full year would be the 10 weeks following Christmas.

– Nigel Cope Investment column, page 20

Treasury claims summit breakthrough on coal as generators agree new deal

The Treasury last night claimed to have achieved a breakthrough in the coal crisis by persuading the power generators to bring forward delivery of coal stocks next year. But as Chris Godsmark explains, the Treasury's attempt to broker a solution to the coal crisis has privately met with scepticism from the generating groups.

Geoffrey Robinson, the embattled Paymaster General, held talks lasting four hours with Asichard Budge, chief executive of RJB and the heads of the three big coal fired generators. Keith Henry from National Power, Ed Wallis from PowerGen and John Devaney from Eastern Group.

The generators had hoped to hear details of the Government's plans for a three month stay of execution for looming pit closures, which could involve up to 5,000 job losses. The proposals, revealed by Tony Blair, the Prime Minister, last week, would involve the generators building up bigger stockpiles of coal after existing long term supply contracts with RJB expire at the end of March.

A Treasury statement last night said National Power and Eastern Group, which have already signed new contracts to buy around half their current order from RJB, had



Geoffrey Robinson: Deal brokered after four hours of talks

agreed to "accelerate deliveries" of coal between April and June.

The statement added: "Arrangements for coal deliveries up to the end of June 1998 have been agreed. This gives the Government the opportunity to carry out the wider ranging reviews on Energy policy it has put in hand."

Officials said National Power would bring forward delivery of 350,000 tonnes between April and June. This represents a limited concession compared with a total order of 8 million tonnes. Eastern would accelerate delivery of 250,000 tonnes, compared with contracts to buy 4 million tonnes a year. National Power confirmed it had agreed to "facilitate" the deal.

PowerGen, which has yet to conclude negotiations with RJB, had agreed to buy at least 1.1 million tonnes from the coal producer. Mr Wallis, PowerGen chief executive, had previously warned he could buy all his coal from abroad. The Treasury said the new deal would be "at a price acceptable to both parties."

Another element to the agreement involves RJB extending redundancy terms to worker from April to June which offer more generous compensation packages. The current redudancy deal, agreed at privatisation, expires with the coal contracts at the end of

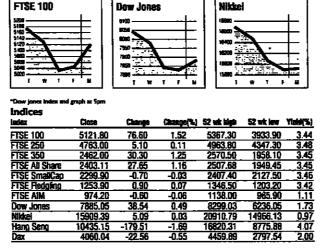
The Treasury said RJB would "use this period to continue to reduce operating costs and to improve their competitiveness. Any increase in pithead stocks in the April to June period will be financed by RJB."

John Redwood, the shadow industry secretary, yesterday accused Mr Robinson of "bungling" by intervening in coal contracts which should have been left to the private sector to sort out.

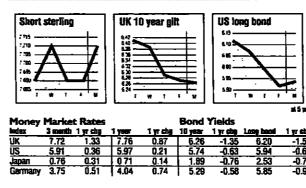
He continued: "Miners will not be gratetul for a very temporary stay of execution which serves only to delay and cut their redundancy money." Mr Redwood said the Treasury should stop interfering and leave energy policy to the energy minister. John Battle. "Geoffrey Robinson should stand aside." he said.

An RJB spokesman said last night that it was unlikely to press ahead with pit closures until the three month deal ended next summer. By then the group, which bought British Coal's English pits on privatisation three years ago, hopes to have gained contracts to supply coal to Spain and Germany. The government has been lobbying to persuade other European countries to buy UK produced coal.

STOCK MARKETS



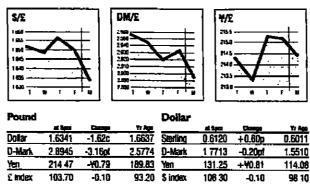
INTEREST RATES



MAIN PRICE CHANGES

| Rises | Price (pł | زدن ود | % Chips | Fails | Price (p) | Chg (p) | % Ches |
|---------------|-----------|--------|---------|---------------|-----------|---------|--------|
| Coats Viyella | 115.00 | 13.50 | 13.30 | Danka Bus Sys | 510.00 | -33.00 | -6.08 |
| Sears | 49 50 | 2.50 | 5.32 | BTP | 358.50 | -16.00 | -4.27 |
| Billiton | 155.00 | 7.75 | 5.26 | Consties Intl | 288.00 | -12.00 | -4.00 |
| Barctays | 1715.00 | 79.00 | 4.83 | Rank Grp | 335.00 | -10.75 | -3.11 |

CURRENCIES



OTHER INDICATORS

| 684 0.0 | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|----------------|---|----------|
| <u>00-}</u> U.1 | 07 23 13 | GDP 1 | 13.90 3 | .80 10 | 9 70 Jan |
| 5.55 2.0 | 50 368.25 | S RPI 1 | 59.60 3 | .70 15 | 3 91 No |
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SBC Warburg confirms bidding for Christie's

SBC Warburg Dillon Read, the merchant bank, yesterday confirmed it had approached Christie's about making a bid for the auction house on behalf of a group of anonymous private investors. As Peter Thal Larsen reports, the move would give Christie's the financial muscle offer guarantees to its customers.

SBC Warburg met Christie's advisers for the first time yesterday, after Christie's' board decided on Sunday evening to proceed with the talks.

The bank is believed to have tabled a tentative offer of 300p a share, valuing Christie's at about £500m. However, this is understood to be an initial offer which may be subsequently raised. Christie's shares, which had risen sharply last week, fell 12p to

However, SBC Warburg last night emphasised that it was acting on behalf of a consortium of private investors rather than itself. Observers had earlier speculated that the bank might be considering a strategic move into the auction house business.

SBC Warburg said it would only proceed with the offer if it had the backing of Christie's board and had completed the necessary due diligence. The identity of the private investors will remain a secret until a final offer is agreed.

The bank is also believed to have guaranteed to retain Christie's existing management and the structure of its board if it consents to a bid.

Last night, Christie's appointed Merrill Lynch, the investment bank, as its joint stockbroker. Until yesterday, SBC Warburg had acted as sole broker to Christie's, but its involvement in the bid raised a potential conflict of interest. Merrill Lynch will work alongside Hambros, Christie's existing adviser.

A week ago, Christie's revealed that it had received a bid approach which it had rejected as too low. Two days later, however, the company said it was considering a modified offer. SBC Warburg is understood to have made both offers. No other bidders are believed to be involved.

If successful, the bid will give Christie's the financial clout to win new business by offering financial guarantees to its clients. Customers are increasingly demanding that auction houses underwrite the proceeds of the auction.

Until recently, however, auction houses have lacked the financial muscle to offer those guarantees. Christie's main rival Sotheby's recently suffered a major loss when an auction it had agreed to underwrite failed to raise the necessary amount.

The success of the offer depends heavily on the support of Joe Lewis, the Bahamas-based British billionaire who owns 29.6 per cent of Christie's. He is understood to have agreed to swap his stake for equity in the new company. He will also help to underwrite auctions by putting up some of the necessary risk capital.

Bass sells bingo business for £279m

Bass continued the process of slimming down to its main hotel and brewing operations yesterday when it sold Gala, the bingo business, to a management buy-in team for £279m in cash. The move ends months of speculation about the future of the 130 bingo halls, while raising investors' expectations that Bass is about to launch a large acquisition or share buy-back.

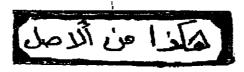
Analysts said the price tag, which includes £43m of cash balances in Gala, was slightly disappointing. "If they had made up their mind to sell last year they could have got more for it," said one. Like the rest of the bingo industry. Gala's profits have come under pressure from the National Lottery. In the year to last September Gala made operating profits of £24m. Bass shares fell 8p to 895p.

The deal will almost halve Bass's net borrowings, which stood at £550m at the end of September. Analysts calculate that the group can now afford to spend more than £2bn on acquisitions or returning cash to shareholders.

Bass refused to be drawn on how it would use the cash. But industry observers believe that the group would prefer to make acquisitions.

"Bass' management are fairly sure they can spend the money more wisely than their shareholders can," one commented. However, he added that if the group had not identified a suitable target by the end of 1998 it would come under pressure to return the cash to shareholders.

– Peter Thal Larsen



THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY SAMEENA AHMAD

MFI misses out on retail boom

It has been a tough year for MFI Furniture. In a period characterised by windfall payments, rising house prices and a revival of consumer confidence, the kitchen and bedrooms group has conspicuously failed to capitalise on the benign trading conditions. MFI shares have underperformed the market by 41 per cent this year and the fear among the group's critics is that if it cannot cash-in during sunny times like these, it will find it much harder next year as higher interest rates start to hit the high street.

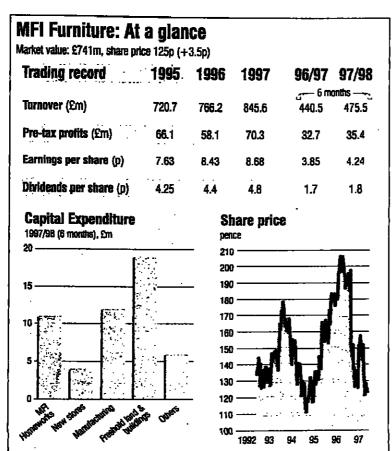
To be fair to the management, there have been specific reasons behind MFT's underperformance. One is the closure of the German operations last year which cost £3.5m. The other is France, where the poor economic climate meant the division lost almost £3m in the half.

Given all that, the 8 per cent increase in half-year pre-tax profits to £35.4m is reasonable and the 8 per cent rise in first-half sales is encouraging. In truth, MFI is in something of a transition phase and there is a new determination among the manage-ment to make more of the assets at their disposal.

The plan is to squeeze more value from the integration between manufacturing and retailing, improve the sales mix towards higher margin, higher ticket items such as kitchens and bedτooms, while shaving back the cost base. This will mean job cuts as the group closes the in-store warehouses at 186 branches and replaces them with 12 "super-warehouses".

In the stores, up to 15 per cent of product lines will be stripped out, with ranges such as upholstery and cheaper cabinet furniture under review. The question is whether MFI is shifting towards higher ticket items at the wrong stage in the cycle and whether the reduction in product lines will

The key to MFI's year will be the 10 weeks after Christmas, which accounts for a third of group's sales. As-



the shares - up 3.5p to 125p-trade on trous Aromascan. Technical hitches a forward rating of 11. A discount to the sector but not one to chase just now.

Bio-tech shares out in the cold

Biotechnology shares? - you just can't give 'em away. Yesterday's crop of results was a sharp reminder of how bad things can get in the UK's unloved biotech sector where disappointing news from heavyweights like Scotia and British Bio has left shares almost 50 per cent off their yearly highs.

Take ML Laboratories. Shares in this controversial group hit the top at almost 470p early last year, before taking a long slide. Full-year results yesterday left the price at 111.5p, down suming full-year profits of £85m-£90m another 23.5p. Then there's the disas-rope, which should mean more royal-terday at 162.5p - any higher.

with this group's electronic nose have left its shares at a 30p low, down from 182p at the start of last year. Then there's Cambridge Antibody Technology. This very promising biotech - albeit with a very young drug pipeline which floated at 500p in March, finished yesterday 5p ahead at 375p after decent full-year results, but close to their 350p all-time low. That said, ML's fortunes are look-

ing better. The group's tie-up with Baxter to sell Icodial, ML's kidney dialysis fluid, should start to bring in a steady royalty stream next year as Baxter will have its first full-year of sales in 16 European countries. With 80 per cent of Telecom is squeezed as larger players the dialysis fluid market and Baxter muscle into its market. The group says pretty positive about Icodial, the income looks of reasonable quality.

ties, and there is certainly an eager market for a good inhaler technology if that is what ML has. Other areas like Aids and cancer look more iffy. If the sector cheers up, as it might in 1998, ML could benefit. Wait for sentiment to im-

World Telecom heads overseas

A company called World Telecom may sound like some huge American operator, with millions of subscribers and billions of profits. In fact, it's an AIM-quoted tiddler which only joined the market in March and is valued at just £57m. The group is just four years old, turned over a meagre £4m last year, and has yet to make a profit.

However, the name says something about the scale of World Telecom's ambitions. It sells prepaid phonecards and telephone chargecards which offer hefty discounts to the rates charged by established operators like BT. Customers include Arthur Andersen and amazingly - BT, which issues the cards to executives to cut telephone bills when they're travelling. World Telecom also produces cards for the likes of Nat West who stick their own names on the cards.

This may seem like a low-margin business. But, crucially, World Telecom also has the technology to handle the calls made with its cards. This allows it to route calls to the cheapest lines available - making a healthy mark-up - and offer extras like voicemail and comprehensive billing. Overseas markets beckon. Yesterday, World Telecom announced plans to invest £1.1m on a similar service in Spain. Germany. Italy and France will follow shortly.

All this should mean explosive growth: house broker Collins Stewart forecasts sales of £30m in 1998, with pretax profits of £1m after a £2.5m loss in 1997. The risk, though, is that World it is nimbler than the opposition and able to stay ahead. But investors will ML's dry powder inhaler licenced to have to see some hard numbers before Medeva is being rolled out across Eu- pushing the shares - unchanged yes-

Sears sells Shoe Express stores at £33m loss

Philip Green, the retail entrepreneur, has taken a further step in the development of his minihigh street empire with the purchase of the Shoe Express stores from Sears. Sears will book a £33m loss on the deal but Mr Green is

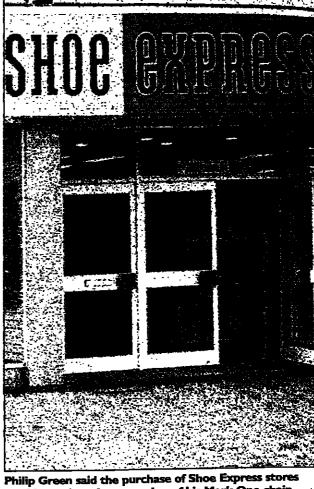
confident he can turn the loss-making stores around. Nigel Cope, City Correspondent, reports.

Mr Green is buying 185 of the Shoe Express branches though it is not clear if he will retain the trading name or continue to run them as shoe shops. Between 75 and 100 of the stores will be converted to Mr Green's Mark One format which specialises in discounted women's fashion. A study will be undertaken to decide the best use of the remaining outlets. The deal means Mr Green.

a former chairman of the What Everyone Wants clothing chain, now controls Shoe Express, Mark One, five branches of the Owen Owen department stores and a stake of about 15 per cent in Sports Division, the sports group which acquired Olympus Sports from Sears. Sports Division is due to float on the stock market next spring. Asked empire Mr Green, said: "It's progressing nicely."

Mr Green has also been tipped as a possible buyer of Shoe City, Sears' loss-making out-of-town shoe superstores. "Anything's possible," Mr Green said yesterday.

However, he said there were no plans to integrate the disparate interests into a single group. Each will retain separate management. Mr Green said: "The entrepreneurial element is in acquiring the business and



would speed up the expansion of his Mark One chain

about his burgeoning retail deal represented a short cut in his plans to expand Mark One. To open 70 to 100 stores is two to three years work."

Ainery, a company controlled by Mr Green, is paying Sears £8.5m for £32.5m of assets. It will also manage the branches, which will be closed by Sears by the end of January. tions but it failed to take off. This will give rise to the loss of around 500 iobs.

slightly less than expected. Shoe shares closed 2.5p up at 49.5p.

knowing what to do with it when you've got it." He said the first mand £18m in the last grant gr on sales of around £165m Shoe Express has been a dis-

aster for Sears' management. The cheap, self-service format; was derived from a successful US equivalent and hailed as a potential saviour of the group's footwear operations. Founded 136 remaining Shoe Express in 1992. Sears spent millions on store conversions and promo-

The sale means Sears has? only Shoe City and Cable & Co., The total cost to Sears of the left to sell of its British Shoe disposal will be around £65m. Corporation subsidiary. Sears

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Diageo to start trading tomorrow after US clears deal

Metropolitan cleared its final hurdle yesterday with the approval of US competition authorities. The condition is that Diageo must sell its **Dewar's Scotch whisky** brand and Bombay gin. Nigel Cope, City Correspondent, reports.

sion means that shares in both Guinness and Grand Metropolitan will cease trading at today's close. Following the approval of the High Court which Diageo, the newly merged entity, will start trading on Wednesday.

Diageo has six months to sell the Dewar's and Bombay Sapphire and Bombay gin brands

The £24bn mega-merger The deal's clearance by United largest ever divestment ordered Domecq, Seagram and Barcardi- up the brand in Europe. Allied as well as Tanqueray, America's States Federal Trade Commis- by the FTC. Each brand will be Martini. The price is expected to Domecq repeated its interest leading premium imported gin. sold to a single purchaser with Credit Suisse First Boston, the investment bank, appointed to handle both deals. A queue of buyers is expect-

> also came yesterday, shares in ed for Dewar's, which is the market leading scotch whisky in the US. It sold 2.7 million cases worldwide last year including 1.5m of the 9m cases sold in American. Likely buyers are exin what is considered to be the pected to include Allied

be around £600m-£700m. The sale of Dewar's was ex-

pected to be a condition of the merger's clearance as Guinness and Grand Met also control J&B and Johnnie Walker, America's second and thirdranked brands. The FTC's decision mirrors that of the European competition authorities which told Guinness in October that it would have to give

esterday: "It's a brand that would be of interest to us but

The Bombay Gin brands, fastest growing parts of Grand Met's drinks portfolio will fetch £50m-£100m. The brands sold 600,000 cases worldwide last year, just over half of which were in the US. Diageo already controls Gordon's and Gilbey's gin

George Bull and Ion Greener, chairmen of Grand Met and Guinness respectively, said they regretted the sale of which have been one of the the two brands but pointed out that it was an achievement to take the deal to fruition just seven months and five days since it was announced.

Diageo will rank as Britain's eight largest company and the world's largest spirits group.

US sees surge in industrial output for November

The turbo-charged American economy saw a surge in industrial production last month. Official figures showed output up U.S. per cent in November, keeping the year-on-year growth at a two-year high of 5.6 per cent. The gains were spread over a wide range of industries. The rate of capacity use in industry rose to 83.2 per cent from 82.9 per cent in October. Although . The the IMF's the Federal Reserve is known to monitor these figures closely, . . . analysts said the news did not make an increase in interest rates more likely. The Federal Open Market Committee, meeting today, is expected to leave rates unchanged because of the financial turmoil in Asia. However, if the economy keeps ? up its pace, fears of higher borrowing costs will return to the financial markets in the new year.

Sedgwick denies Aon bid

Sedgwick Group has been forced to issue a denial of a £1bn bid from giant US insurance broker Aon. Shares in the group rocketed after weekend press reports suggested a bid was in the offing. Despite the denial, shares stayed at a high of 151p, valuing the group at £811m, against a year low of 115p. In a statement, the group said: "Sedgwick confirms that no discussions with Aon have taken place during the past 12 months or are currently taking place. However, analysts remain convinced that a bid for Sedgwick, which owns the UK's largest financial advice practice, is in the offing in the context of widespread consolidation in the insurance broking sector. The Sedgwick Group is now being linked with Aon's cash-rich US rival. Marsh & McLennan.

Whitbread to sell 62 pubs

Whitbread, the brewer and pub company, said it would sell 62 leased pubs to Avebury Taverns for an undisclosed sum. The sale of the pubs, which are in the North of England, follows Whitbread's sale, in September, of 94 pubs in the South of England to Enterprise Inns Pic for £9.4m. "The sale is part of a review of our estate which we undertake from time to time in a rapidly changing market place," said Ray Parker, property director of Whitbread's leased pub division.

ACCA warning over wages

Companies across the UK are completely unprepared for the introduction of a national minimum wage, according to a survey by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA). Many thought the minimum wage could lead to increased inflation, greater unemployment and damage

Newmall bids for Wellman...

Newmall, a company set up by venture capital business Alchemy, is offering 50p per share in an agreed bid for Wellman, the maker of industrial furnaces and ovens. Newmall said the offer valued Wellman at around £73m. Wellman said it considered the offer "the best option for shareholders". . . It said the offer represents a premium of 77 per cent to the closing price of Wellman share of 28.25p on 31 October.

BICC unit wins £100m deals

BICC Group, the cables and electrical equipment group, has confirmed that its unit BICC Communications has won two partnering contracts, together worth around £100m over the next three years. BICC said its unit has agreed to supply optical and metallic cable services for telecommunication and cable television networks on an exclusive basis for three years. The company also said the unit also won a contract to supply ESAT Telecom of Ireland.

THE INDEPENDENT

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Psion signs deal with Dell to supply modem cards

company, has signed an agreement to supply US giant Dell Computer with the next generation of hi-tech computer modem cards world-wide.

Responding to questions about trading ahead of the crucial Christmas period, the company said that sales of its new range of Series 5 hand-held computers were "very strong".

Psion Dacom, a wholly owned subsidiary of Psion, will supply Dell, the world's largest direct seller of personal computers, with 56K, high-speed PC cards. Psion believes the deal will add between £15m and £20m to Dacom's revenues, which themselves are around a fifth of the group's total sales.

However, it admitted that with price competition on PC cards "cut-throat", particularly in the direct sales market,

Psion, the hand-held computer margins on the agreement are unlikely to be very large. However, the deal will boost Psion's presence in the US, where it has struggled to establish itself and where Dell is establishing a growing presence. The two companies already have supply agreements in Europe. Psion's shares rose 17.5p to 451p.

Psion says its 56K cards. which are the size of a credit card and replace desktop modems, are the fastest modems that can be used along normal telephone lines. The cards are reprogrammable and can be upgraded to use with digital GSM mobile-phone systems and ISDN lines.

In contrast to several retailers like Comet, which have found pre-Christmas sales sluggish, Psion said it was confident about sales of the Series 5.

– Sameena Ahmad

| ľ | COMPANY | RESULTS |
|----|---------|---|
| I. | | *************************************** |

| | Turnover £ | Pre-tax (| EPS | Dividend |
|----------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Artomascen (I) | 0.491m (1.35m) | -1.07m (-1.097m) | -3 97p (-4.06p) | - (-) |
| Arrocet Mining (i) | 17.57m (8.68m) | -0.90m (-2.98m) | -26p (-298p) | - (-) |
| Burndene invs (F) | 91.31m (85 47m) | 5.009m (6.061m) | 4.05p (3.81p) | 2.05p (2.0p) |
| Cambridge Antibody (F) | 1 1m (2 1m) | -8 4m (-3.3m) | -41 3p (-32 3p) | - (-) |
| Channel Heldings (I) | 30 13m (298.2m) | 1.77m (1.38m) | 1.3p 1 0p | 0 55p (0 55p) |
| Fountain Ferestry (F) | 21 8m (18 8m) | 0.955m (0.723m) | 7.9p (7 1p) | 2 75p |
| Georgid Cashless Sys()* |)3.2Sm (6.17m) | -1.29m (D 824m) | -1 29p (4 15p) | rel |
| Handleigh (A) | 14.30m (15.23m) | 0.933m (0.953m) | 8 Sp (8 Sp) | 2.25p (2.25p) |
| Hardys & Hauseu (F) | 35 72m (34 49m) | 8.48m (8 27m) | 23.07p (21 97p) | 171 4p (10 6p) |
| MR Furniture (1) | 475.5m (440.5m) | 35.4m (32.7m) | 4.24p (3.85p) | 1 Bp (1 7p) |
| Mil. Laboratories (F) | 6.9m (10.4m) | 1.1m (5.5m) | 0 Sp (3 8p) | · (-) |
| Phonelink (I) | 1.85m (2.15m) | -1.74m (-3 15m) | -3.6p (-6.7p) | - (-) |
| Piysa (i) | 71 1pg (67.1m) | 3 9m (3 65m) | 5.6p (4 9p) | 2.2p (2.0p) |
| Stockbowrne (1) | 0.600m (1.25m) | -0 07m (-0 45m) | -0.07p (-0.45p) | nii |
| (F) - Final (1) - Interior | COMPARAINE SQUE | s pro-forma | | |

Westminster trust plan may spark boom in sector

Westminster Healthcare's decision to set up a property investment trust could be the start of a boom in sale and leasebacks in the UK nursing home sector, Sameena Ahmad looks at nursing home tiddler Tamaris, a rare champion of sale and leaseback deals in Britain who's example persuaded Westminster to make its move.

That Westminster Health Care. the UK's second biggest nursing home group, capitalised at more than £250m turned to Tamaris, a tiddler valued at £15m, to kick-start its newly created property investment trust says a lot about the potential of sale and leaseback (S&L) financing in the UK.

Compared to the US, where almost every nursing home company is funded through S&L. Tamaris is the only UK company to have extensively used the arrangement to finance growth.

The majority of nursing home groups here have chosen to own and manage their own homes. That was fine when nursing home companies, funded by central government, were growing profits and could keep hecomes vital."

○ **€D ●** ●

shareholders sweet enough to support their huge cash needs. But when local governments controlled the coffers, funding for care home beds dried up and so did both the operator's profits and the City's goodwill. Tamaris was different, growing profitably and fast.

Back in 1994 it had 234 care home beds. By 1996 that had grown to 906 beds. In March this year the number had more than doubled to 2,000. The deal announced yesterday where Tamaris is buying 12 Westminster homes and leasing five back through Atlantic Healthcare, Westminster's joint venture investment company, has helped to more than double Tamaris' size again.

Barbara-Ann Maxwell. Tamaris' chief executive, explains the advantages of S&L "We don't see ourselves as property specialists. We are operators, that's our strength." She points out that with interest rates rising and nursing home companies now forced to depreciate assets, the terms of S&L are easily as good as borrowing from banks,

"Not only do we believe we get as good a deal as we could get from the banks, but we have control over our costs, she explained.

"That is important in this business. There is a finite potential operating profit per home and so cost control

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OUTLOOK

A new hole for Geoffrey Robinson

Geoffrey Robinson's desk it would read "When in a hole, stop digging" since the more the Paymaster General tries to explain away his offshore trusts the deeper into the mire he seems to get. Yesterday, however, he put his personal travails to one side to help excavate his Government from a different sort of hole. This particular one is black and has been created by someone else who knows a lot about digging, Richard Budge of RJB Mining.

The idea that the Paymaster General can reverse the long-term decline of the coal industry by inviting Mr Budge into his office along with the chief executives of the three big generators and banging a few heads belongs in fantasy land.

But it is what passes these days for Labour's energy policy. Until the Department of Trade and Industry decides what to do with all those applications for gas-fired stations, the bulge in the pipeline will get bigger and we will have policy on

From a very New Labour attitude of benign neglect a matter of weeks ago the Government now believes it has an historic role to play as defender of the coal industry and saviour of miners' jobs, certainly at least this side of Christmas.

Quite why a member of the Treasury team has been selected for this task when the Government already has an energy minister and keeps insisting there is no question of throwing money at the pits At last, a useful corrective to the fashion is a minor mystery. But it probably has something to do with Mr Robinson's "can down spells doom for the rest of the world. currency to float, which traders said

politician second.

This is hardly the first time New Labour has displayed its quaint but naive faith in the ways of the business world. It has already been beguiled on several occasions. Need to lend some respectability to the welfare to work programme? Then get the man from the Pru to call. Need to bring some intellectual rigour to the tax and benefit review? Then bring on Martin "two brains" Taylor from Barclays Bank.

As Mr Robinson has demonstrated, however, businessmen are mere mortals too. The offshore trusts affair is certainly an embarrassment but thus far it is hard to pin much more on the Paymaster General than a charge of hypocrisy. Squirrelling millions away from the taxman while penalising those whose savings exceed £50,000 is poor politics. There again, propping up the pits while denying launch aid for Airbus (another Robinson decision) looks like poor business.

The lesson is that businessmen and polities do not always mix, even for those invited into Labour's gilded inner circle. It will take a few more embarrassing episodes to drive home the message. Mr Taylor could provide the next one if he decides to buy NatWest and take several thousand bank workers out of the tax system and on to unemployment benefits.

for predicting that Asia's financial melt-

cession for Asia, say the cool heads at the OECD. For the rest, the crisis comes as a rather useful counterweight to the danger of overheating. Certainly, the sharp slowdown in South-east Asia will slow exports from the rest of the world and worsen the European and US trade position. But there need be next to no impact on growth and inflation as long as central banks adjust interest rates ap-

Does this rather contrarian view in the semi-annual Economic Outlook make sense? On the evidence so far, yes. The Federal Reserve has already held off raising US interest rates when many analysts expected an increase, and it is likely to leave rates unchanged when it meets again today. As indicator after indicator of domestic inflationary pressure starts to flash red, this can only be a reaction to the potential spillover from Asia.

There is also a growing sentiment that the Bank of England will not increase UK rates any further - a view shared by the OECD, which sees Britain coming in for a soft landing. The Bank's Monetary Policy Committee appears to be waiting for firmer evidence on the export front, which is where the first symptoms of "Asian flu" afflicting the British economy would manifest themselves.

The view that collateral damage on the rest of the world would be limited got several further boost yesterday from within Asia. Korea said it would allow its

If there was a motto pinned above do" image as a businessman first and a. It spells, if not doorn then possibly re- would get the pain of devaluation over. Acer to these shores has brought on a quickly and allow the won to stabilise, rather than dragging out the decline over several more weeks or months. A package of tax-cuts started to take shape in Japan, with details due today. Even Mahathir Mohamad, the motormouth Malaysian Prime Minister, admitted that the Asian countries had made some economic policy mistakes.

He, and other Asean leaders, still criticised the West for not doing enough to help sort out the crisis. No thanks there for the near-\$100bn in emergency credit arranged for South-east Asia in the space of five months. But the assorted grumblers ought to be even more grateful that the Fed and other central banks are not maniacs for financial orthodoxy at all costs, as they are so often portrayed.

This is not to say that there is no danger of the financial meltdown worsening. getting beyond the control of the central bank firefighters. Of course catastrophe is possible. It is just not the most proba-

Meanwhile a bit of evidence at last that it is not all doom and gloom in the Far East. Acer's decision to press ahead with its computer plant in South Wales demonstrates that the Taiwanese economy, at least, is not suffering from quite the same Asian flu that has infected the rest of the region.

Unfortunately, the battle to bring

nasty outbreak of that well-documented investmentitis. In its most virulent form. competing regions of the country outbid one another for foreign manufacturing projects so extravagantly that it leaves the taxpayer nursing a very painful hole in his

The illness is said to be endemic in the valleys, nor does it appear to discriminate between political parties. William Hague contracted a Korean dose of it when he was running the show and persuaded Lucky Goldstar to set up in the princi-

Now Ron Davies, Labour's Welsh Secretary, seems to have contracted a strain from Taipei, if his envious competitors in the North East are to be

We have not been told how much the Welsh Development Agency is paying to get Acer and its jobs into Cardiff but we do know that it is building the factory and the access roads for them and providing some training money.

Outbreaks of this sort were supposed to have been a thing of the past now that the Prime Minister has given Margaret Beckett the overall responsibility for vetting and co-ordinating bids for inward investment projects.

However, having got the antidote she seems to have gone all squeamish about inserting the needle. Come on nurse. Temperatures are getting dangerously

IMF under fire from Asean leaders as S Korea floats won

South Korea bowed to intense IMF pressure yesterday and announced it would let its currency float on the open market from today. Richard Lloyd Parry reports from Seoul on the financial fire-fighting ahead of Thursday's elections, while Stephen Vines reports on the meeting at which Far Eastern heads of state criticised the IMF's response to the region's

The news that Korea would give up its struggle to limit movements in the won, and allow the currency to float against the dollar came after the intervention by the Bank of Korea that boosted the exchange rate by its maximum daily amount of 10 per cent. It closed at 1,563.9 won to the dollar, while the key share price index climbed to 385.80.

A Bank of Korea official said: "The decision was made at the request of the IMF. At first we tried to resist, but the JIMF request was so strong."

The move was welcomed by the financial markets, with analysts predicting that the prospect of billions of dollars in emergency credit arranged by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) could now restore confidence in the country's shattered markets. The benchmark stock index soared 7.22 per cent - its biggest one-day

percentage rise - paring its loss for the year to 41 per cent.

But leaders of the Association of South-east Asian Nations (Asean), meeting in the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur, criticised the industrialised nations for not providing enough assistance. The official communiqué cast doubt on the effectiveness of the international rescue packages.

The nosedive in Asia's stocks and currencies eased a fidence remained fragile in a week of political uncertainty throughout the region. In South Korea, where a

new president will be elected in two days' time, the central bank is reported to have sold some \$200m to prop up the won on Friday. The election will be held on the same day that a \$3.6bn installment of IMF credit is due to be delivered, on top of \$5.6bn which has already been handed over.

The Bank of Korea had to step in after two leading presidential candidates said last week that they would renegotiate the terms of the IMF plan if elected. Over the weekend, however, a joint statement from the outgoing president, Kim Young Sam, and all three front runners pledged that the package would be put into action as agreed.

In Tokyo share prices were little changed yesterday, although the yen weakened after a deeply gloomy business survey. Much attention will be tocused today on a tax-cutting plan due to be announced by the ruling Liberal Democratic Party: but few expect the measures to be radical.

The Bank of Japan admitted its next survey is likely to show even worse business morale. The yen weakened to ¥131.60 to the dollar, the lowest for more than five and a half years.

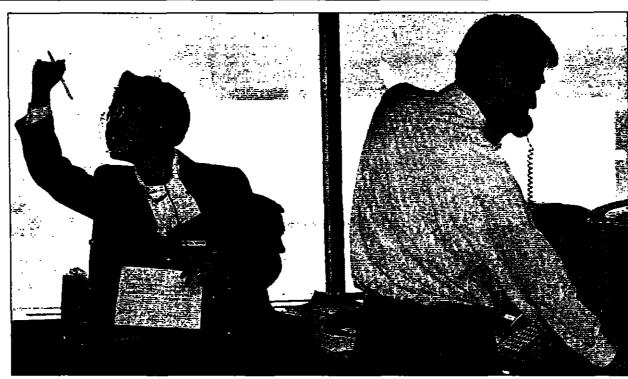
At the Asean leaders' meet-

ing, Mahathir Mohamad, the Malaysian Prime Minister, yesterday admitted that South-east Asian countries themselves were at fault for building up a high degree of indebtedness. However, he returned to his falittle yesterday, although con- miliar combative style in critiprice it was extracting for its rescue packages for Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand, as well as South Korea.

"I would think the IMF is looking purely at the macroeconomic picture and not seeing the impact of measures required of client states," said Mr Mahathir. He predicted that "lots of companies, including very good companies, will probably fold up".

The Malaysian leader's comments were reflected in the meeting's communiqué, which noted that the IMF rescues had not restored confidence. It described the region's crisis as part of a global problem and said that Europe, Japan and the United States should be doing more to assist.

The leaders in Kuala Lumour were torn between an anxiety not to provoke further market turmoil while wanting to emphasise the gravity of the crisis. As they met, the Indonesian and Thai currencies plunged to new lows while the Malaysian and Philippines currencies also declined.



cising the IMF for the high South Korean dealers during trading of US dollars at the Korea Exchange Bank in Seoul yesterday. During Photograph: Ahn Young-joon/AP morning session, the dollar fell to 1,675 won from 1,710 won of last Friday's session

OECD makes upbeat forecast for West

Prospects for the western economies have improved in the past six months despite the Asian crisis, according to a new forecast from the OECD. But its optimism depends on member countries getting their policies right. Diane Coyle,

Economics Editor,

weighs up the risks.

An "exceptional" performance by the American economy and a firmer recovery in Europe explain the more upheat outlook in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's semi-annual economic forecast. It has revised up its predictions for growth in the world's

29 leading economies, saying

they will expand by almost 3 per

cent in 1998, just a shade lower tries will use interest rate polithan this year.

The influential forecast pencils in a soft landing for the UK. with growth slowing to a sustainable pace and inflation close to its target. It forsees no further rise in interest rates but warns that unemployment will start to rise next year.

The OECD also cautions that a minimum wage at too high a level would "jeopardise the employability of the low-skilled". In a submission to the commission on the minimum wage it has recommended a lower rate or an exemption for young workers.

Its prediction that the Asian crisis is set to have a relatively subdued impact on the rest of the world is likely to prove controversial. Although the report says the turmoil could potentially cut OECD growth by as much as 1 per cent over the next two years, it says member councy to offset the Asian spillover.

"Central banks can see it coming, and they should be able to absorb a lot of the effect by lower interest rates," said Paul Atkinson, head of economic assessment for the OECD. The worst of the crisis would therefore be confined to Asia itself, with the forecasts for

Japan and Korea slashed. However, some economists believe there is a risk recession in Asia will have a serious impact on the US and Europe. Gerard Lyons at DKB International, said: "It is right to take a cautious view about prospects

for the rest of the world." The OECD concedes that the outlook does depend on its Asian members, Japan and Korea, carrying out the appropriate policies too. It recommends tax cuts in Japan but worries that government policy measures

"appear to be approaching their feasible limits.

For Korea, the document predicts a sharp slowdown from this year's likely growth rate of 6.2 per cent. The forecast for the OECD area as a whole in 1998 is that GDP will expand by 2.9 per cent, compared with the 2.7 per cent growth rate pencilled in earlier this year. There are almost no signs of inflationary pressure.

Britain's GDP is likely to expand by 2.2 per cent, a downgrade from 2.7 per cent. The successive interest rate increases since 1 May get the credit for cooling the economy to a steadier pace. In the moncy markets, sterling fell below 2.90 against the German mark,

a 1 per cent fall on the day. However, the report warms that the unemployment rate isunlikely to fall much further despite the Government's welfare-to-work programme.

Three Arrows ponders stock market flotation

Three Arrows, the company that belps drivers with repairs and insurance claims if they have an accident that is not their fault, is considering a stock market flotation.

The Manchester-based group has appointed NatWest Markets, the investment bank, to look at the options for the business though Chris Norman. Three Arrows' founder and owner, says he has yet to make a firm decision.

Three Arrows specialises in credit hire and repair. After an accident, the company directs the unfortunate driver to a garage, provides them with a hire car while their vehicle is being repaired and then chases up the claim with the offending driver's insurance

company A float has been made more likely by the success of Helphire, a similar business that floated

Since coming to the market at 100p Helphire's share price has soared, hitting a new high of 292n last week.

Mr Norman said that until now the company's growth had been funded from its own resources.

"We have very little bank

borrowings," he said. But he pointed out that raising funds on the stock market would be necessary if the company decided to increase its rate of growth and expand the credit repair side of the busi-

The latter is particularly cash-hungry because the company tends to pay garages for repairs promptly, while it frequently has to wait several months for insurance companies to cough up.

However, increased competition means credit hire and repair companies have no option but to offer the service to garages in order to get them sign

"You have to offer it, it's the only way you'll get the business." Mr Norman said.

Helphire, which is forecast to make a pretax profit of £2.5m in the year to March 1998, has a market value £47.6m.

But Three Arrows is larger and would be able to command a heftier price tag. In the year to August 1997 the company made pretax profits of £6m on turnover of £20m.

- Peter Thal Larsen

Nationwide heightens mortgage rivalry Savings industry criticises latest

Nationwide yesterday announced it would keep its mortgage rates substantially lower than its quoted rivals indefinitely - unless interest rates rose again. Andrew Verity reports on the latest volley in the war between the mutuals and their rivals.

The UK's largest building society claimed the "mutuality gap" allowed it to go on offering rates at least 60 basis points lower than plc rivals such as the Halifax, which were obliged to pay dividends to shareholders.

The announcement defied expectations that Nationwide would be forced by the rising

in January, when it will increase the rate of interest it pays on savings accounts. Nationwide is selling new

variable rate mortgages at 8.1 per cent, while the Halifax charges 8.7 per cent. The building society is at the same time competing with supermarkets such as Tesco and Sainsbury by offering an instant access postal account which pays interest of 6.7 per cent.

The margin between the best savings rates and borrowing rates, from which the building society extract most of its profit, is now less than 1.5 points, leading quoted lenders to question whether Nationwide's position is sustainable.

In contrast, Halifax offers interest of just 3.45 per cent on its instant access account, leaving it with a margin of more

cost of lending to raise its rates than 4.5 per cent between saving and lending rates. Brian Davis, Nationwide's

chief executive, said: "After a tremendously successful 1997, we are continuing to build on the natural advantage we hold as a building society.

He added: "Over the typical life of a mortgage, 7 years, and based on rates available from 1 January, a Nationwide borrower would be £1,911 better off. We aim to make 1998 a happy new year for all our customers."

However. Nationwide was careful to stress that the promise would not hold if the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee decides again to raise base rates.

The move follows an announcement last week by Bradford & Bingley, another mutual building society, that it would

raise interest rates for savers by up to 0.45 percentage points. It is now offering 6.8 per cent on its instant access postal ac- Howard Davies, the chairman count and is pledged not to hoost its variable rate of 7.95 per cent before 1 February. However, Bradford & Bin-

gley's subsidiary, Mortgage Express, has been unable to demonstrate the benefits of mutuality. Rather than trading on the gap between savings and borrowings, the wholly-owned company has itself to pay market rates when it borrows capital on the money markets.

A spokesman for the Halifax said standard variable rates were less relevant now that the vast majority of new mortgages were fixed-rate loans. But he conceded that the bulk of existing borrowers, who have variable rate mortgages, would

appointment to the FSA of the Financial Services Authority (FSA), has appointed

the man behind the decision to launch the mammoth review of mis-sold pensions to be one of the main advisers to the superregulator's new board. The decision is likely to aggravate a savings industry already smarting about the board's lack of industry representatives. the industry. Michael Blair, the key policy Geoffrey Pointon, a former

former who led the decision to launch the pension mis-selling review in 1994, was yesterday appointed as the top adviser to the board of directors of the FSA.

The decision to appoint Mr Blair, currently deputy chief executive of the Securities and Investment Board (SIB), drew immediate criticism from a sav-

ings industry which privately believes the mis-selling review was the product of a great miscalculation by the regulators.

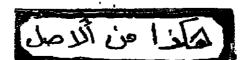
Industry practitioners said that while Mr Blair was respected as a regulator, his appointment would further alienate practitioners from a new regulator which now had very little top-level input from

board member of financial advice regulator Firnbra, said: "Mr Davies has got a major challenge on his hands to show that he is in touch with the industry. Many feel that the review has blighted the industry for too long and now, with politicians getting involved, it is going to continue."

While leading industry figures have accepted the pension review as a necessary evil, many believe that SIB, the FSA's predecessor, failed to calculate the effort required to complete it. The deadline for complet-

ing the review of 90 per cent of the most urgent cases of misselling was set in 1994 for 1 January 1996. But during 1995 and 1996 the review became mired in legal disputes and even the most urgent phase is more than two years behind schedule.

The FSA yesterday said preference for the new posts had been given to insiders at the old regulators, although external advisers had been appointed to monitor the recruitment. - Andrew Verity



Siemens talk puts Motion Media in the spotlight

MARKET REPORT



CATHY NEWMAN

picture. The company has been climbing for a few days now, and was up another 10p to 190p yesterday.

Dealers are gambling on a large overseas orders for the video-phones, which cost £1,000 each. Industry pundits say Siemens may be about to place an order with Motion worth up to £100m. The German electronics behemoth has pledged to supply 100,000 phones to Deutsche Telekom, and may turn to Motion to fulfil the demand.

Motion is also thought to be talking to BT and Alcatel about its products, which also include television set-top sold its thousandth videophone by Christmas.

Elsewhere, Shell might

Motion Media, the Ofex-listed have adopted the advertising comed a commitment to ground. The index soon rallied, the real story behind the fiminnow which sells video slogan of a certain blue-chip greater transparency, which telecoms company, proving will see the company report- 5121.8, but volume was low. beyond all reasonable doubt that it's good to talk.

fetti. Nat West is "very positive" on the company, and has included it in its top 15 for 1998. Hoare Govett, Kleinwort Benson and SBC Warburg all joined the Shell appreciation society, after being impressed by the company's plans for the next five years. Shell has pledged to make a 13 per cent return on capital next boxes. It is expected to have year, and has also hinted that a share buy-back might be a suffering from Christmas party

ing its results in dollars.

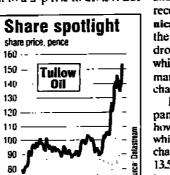
More than 20 million The oil company saw its shares changed hands, making share-price zoom 20.5p to end it the most heavily traded the session at 448.5p after a Footsic stock. Cairn Energy round of briefings with in- firmed 1.5p in sympathy to vestors on Friday, Since then, 510p. Shell and Cairn anbrokers' buy notes have been nounced last month that they raining down on Shell like con- were hoping to invest up to \$5bn in exploration and development in Bungladesh. Another to exude a certain

oily charm yesterday was Tullow Oil. The group, which started the year well below the 100p mark, ended up 6.75p at 153.5p, with dealers saying a bid was on the cards. Enterprise Oil also notched up 2p

Dealers appeared to be possibility if Dutch law is hangewers during the morning. changed. Investors also wel- with Footsic struggling to gain

ending up 76.6 points at nancials' strength was once An unexciting 599.1m shares of further consolidation are changed hands.

were in demand. Barclays closed 79p richer at £17.15, and Lloyds TSB jumped 28p to 765p. A new finance director at Abbey National helped it to a 29p rise to £10.57. But



again bid speculation. Hopes rife, prompted by comments in close, have turned their at-Apart from oils, banks the weekend press from Barclays' chief executive. Cordiant, the advertising

and marketing group which closed at 110p on Friday night, finally did the splits yesterday, and received a somewhat cool reception. Cordiant Communications, which comprises the Bates Worldwide agency. dropped a penny to 109p. while Saatchi & Saatchi fared marginally better, closing un-

changed at 110p. Demerger talk proved a however. The textile group. which owns the Jaegar clothes chain, was in fashion, adding terday it would be issuing its December trading statement

on Wednesday, where it would talk about proposals for a split.

Several brokers, mindful that the year is drawing to a tention to 1998 forecasts. UBS recommended nine stocks for 1998, including Gallaher, which improved 9.5p to 354.5p. and Logica, which

ended 7.5p better off at £10.60. NatWest, meanwhile, tipped Pearson, up 27p at 840p. Abbey National, and Barclays. The investment house believes Footsie will end next year edging towards the 6,000 mark at 5,700.

Sedgwick, the insurance broker, had a field day in the panacea for Coats Viyella, morning after a report over the weekend that it had been talking to Aon about a merger. However, the company issued 13.5p to end at 115p. It said yes- a statement later in the day denying the story, so the shares closed just 2p up at 150p.

TAKING STOCK

AIM-listed Property Asset Holdings (PAH) made its debut yesterday. The company, which acquires property in a around London, placed at of and closed Ip higher at 7p. PAR has around £9m to spend on property which will provide an above average return on investment. It already has interests in the King's Road, and in south-west London.

Audio Book & Music Holdings (ABM), the Ofex-traded company which markets and distributes audio book and music, obtained a £500,000 secured term loan yesterday to expand its operations and stock a wider range of products. ABM added 5p to 100p, and was also buoyed by news of an agreement with Virgin/Our Price to supply audio books.

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source: Bloomberg

What I think will happen is

that the twinges of concern ev-

ident now will become more

marked. Some sectors, partic-

ularly those where competition

and the strong pound contin-

ues to drive prices down will

continue to prosper. Others, in

particular those supported by

one-off gains (be they from

building society conversion or

City bonuses) will have a much

tougher time. I would, for ex-

ample, be surprised if car sales

next autumn are as strong as

they have been this one, or

foreign holiday bookings for

1999 will be as buoyant as

when the economy comes off

the curve: when it has to adjust

from faster-than-trend growth

to, if things go right, trend

growth, and if things do not, be-

low trend growth. It is always

difficult making that transi-

tion and we cannot assume that

the new team at the Treasury

and the new team at the Bank

of England will be able to

micro-manage it particularly

remember the lessons of the

early 1990s and be aware that

booms do not run on for

Meanwhile, we should all

For next year is the year

bookings for next summer.

23/BUSINESS



HAMISH MCRAE

ON SEASONAL **PROSPECTS** FOR THE RETAIL SECTOR

for consumer goods and many consumer services, a solid increase in real personal disposable income, the wealth effect from rising house prices, the lagged impact of the windfall gains from the building society conversions - a series of features have come together to boost the feel-good factor this Christmas. So it would be astounding were it not to be a good season for the retailers.

But what happens next? There is a whiff of fear in the air, and not just in the City where there is a nagging doubt that the bonuses this year will be the last good haul for a a decent guess. We do know while. The OECD is downgrading its forecasts for growth next year - though domestic know that there are pockets of conditions in the UK are not resistance. We can therefore a major part of the down grades. Meanwhile, there are ularly important: the world of just the few odd pre-Christmas very low inflation (and falling sales around, reminiscent of the desperation of retailers in the last recession, and puzzling in the middle of what the figures say is a boom.

Let's stand back a moment and try and identify what we she is to find that next time the ey out of UK Inc. and put part really know for sure, what we price is lower - not an incencan reasonably guess, and what tive to rush out. we cannot possibly know. We know the big ticket story: you can see that in the graph on the thanks to these most buyers are it will be about the same for the left, showing the last three not "liquidity-constrained" at windfalls. By next summer we vears of car sales. It is a pret-the moment, but they know will be back to normal. ty jagged trend, to be sure, but that next year will not be the

Will this be the last hot Christmas for the UK?

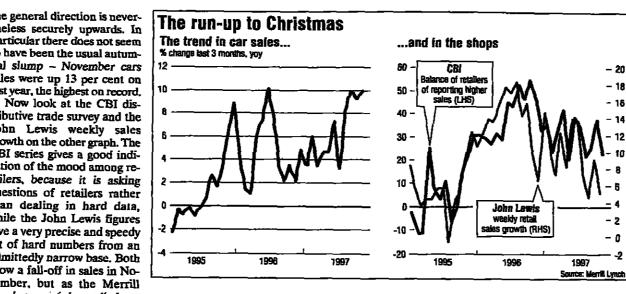
the general direction is nevertheless securely upwards. In particular there does not seem to have been the usual autumnal slump - November cars sales were up 13 per cent on last year, the highest on record.

tributive trade survey and the John Lewis weekly sales growth on the other graph. The CBI series gives a good indication of the mood among retailers, because it is asking questions of retailers rather than dealing in hard data, while the John Lewis figures give a very precise and speedy It feels fizzy, doesn't it? Falling set of hard numbers from an unemployment, stable prices admittedly narrow base. Both show a fall-off in sales in November, but as the Merrill Lynch team (who pulled together these numbers) point out, the trend in sales has been particularly volatile this year, with the collapse in September (probably associated But, overall, there is a repeat with the death of Diana, of the phenomenon of three Princess of Wales) and the bounce-back in October, And as noted above, there is just a slumped. faint twitchiness in the latest reports from the shops: some are make a reasonable guess that going wonderfully, but there is

hesitation elsewhere. Now we move towards the areas where we have to make that retail demand generally is ployment may be rising in the pretty strong, and we also deduce that prices are particprices for consumer electronic goods) has taken pressure off the buyer to move fast.

Indeed, the reverse effect happens: the longer the buyer dithers, the more likely he or windfalls take a chunk of mon-

We also know that the windfall gains will not be repeated:



has fallen dramatically in price - foreign holidays are a good example - sales whizz away. years ago when every time sellers tried to up prices, sales

Looking ahead, we can next year will be much quieter than last. Forget for the moment about the possible slower growth, forget about the (very real) chance that unemsecond half of next year, we know that the windfall effect will be over. That alone will ensure a consumer slow-down.

What has happened is the National Lottery in reverse. When the lottery began, it sliced a chunk out of retail spending and put it, after a time-lag, into long-term capital investment projects. The of it into consumer goods. It took about 18 months for the lottery effect to work its way through the system, and I guess

So we can be pretty sure year for that.

same. When a big ticket item that there will be domestic reasons for a pause next year. What we cannot possibly know is whether that pause will develop into something more sinister. Candidates abound which might tip a pause into a plunge: the (maybe) five-year Far East recession; the end of the long bull market in the US; a new dip in continental Europe, where demand at present is only being sustained by strong exports.

> What worries me is this agglomeration of potential negatives from abroad - the string of big things which might go wrong. Not all of them will; maybe none of them will. But the list of things which seem likely to turn out better than expected is shorter and mostly domestic: still-low inflation; a current account still in surplus; and ... no, I think that is about it.

> Conclusion? This is going to be an unusual Christmas in the sense that Christmas 1998 will almost inevitably be a more sombre affair. That is not to predict economic disaster next vear, which instinctively I think is unlikely, for there will be too much momentum in the economy through the first half of the

BUSINESS JOHN

WILLCOCK

PEOPLE &



"It's the end of an era", one seasoned City campaigner murmured yesterday, as the banks finally pulled the plug on Brent

It had to happen, really. The pubs to betting shops group founded by "Gorgeous" George Walker entered that twilight world of "the work-out" six years ago, groaning under debts of £1.4bn. Now its in receivership.

At the beginning of this month the present management sold off the last big asset, the 1,700-strong William Hill betting shop chain, to Nomura. The Pubmaster group was sold over a year ago.

So at 7.30 yesterday morning Scott Barnes and Martin Ellis of accountants Grant Thornton were sent in as receivers to flog off the remaining bits and pieces.

Mr Walker, the former East End boxer, was thrown out by the banks years ago. The last chief executive, John Leach, was sacked by the receivers along with the rest of the remaining board yesterday. As one City hand put it, "Mr Leach has done a wonderful job for the banks by getting back around £1bn for them. So if anyone out there has a job for Mr Leach, that would be a great Christmas present for him." Brent Walker's banks, led by Standard

Chartered and Lloyds Bank, are still left with a bill for unpaid interest of around half a billion. No Yuletide stocking fillers for them, I fear. Scott Barnes didn't want to talk too much

about the worth of the remaining bits to be sold off, since Brent Walker's bonds are still traded on the secondary debt markets. All I would say is, don't get too excited.

Barrie Stephens is so keen to more to his new house in Florida that he has brought forward his retirement date from the chairmanship of Siebe, the engineering group, from May to February. Mr Stephens will be 70 next year, having been with the company for 35 years, so I can't really blame him. Industrial control systems can lose their allure after a bit.

Mr Stephen's successor-designate Colin Marshall, as announced last July, is an exceedingly busy bee, and cannot take the helm at Siebe until he has completed his Presidency of the CBI. Lest anyone forget, Mr Marshall is also chairman of Britiah Airways, deputy chairman of BT and chairman of Incheape. Not to worry, Philip Beck, a board member of Siebe, has stepped forward to act as an interim chairman until Mr Marshall

More deck chair shuffling on the good ship Abbey National pending Peter Birch's retirement next March. The former building society has appointed one of the youngest finance directors in the FTSE 100 index. Congratulations to Mark Pain, a born and bred Brummie, who is currently group financial controller.

Mr Pain has been working for the chief executive designate Ian Harley for two and a half years, following a career with Deloitte & Touche and the TSB. Mr Pain puts his youthful success down to "a balanced portfolio of skills, a clear vision of the organisation and a lot of hard work."

He does have an Achilles Heel, however: "Tragically I'm a Manchester City supporter."

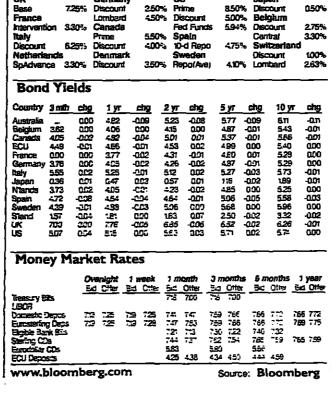
Other management changes at Abbey include Andrew Pople, managing director, retail, who is assuming responsibility for general insurance business. Mr Pople masterminded the acquisition of Scottish Mutual. His nick-name at Abbey is "love child", because, I'm told, colleagues were jealous at his rapid (and fully deserved) rise to prominence.

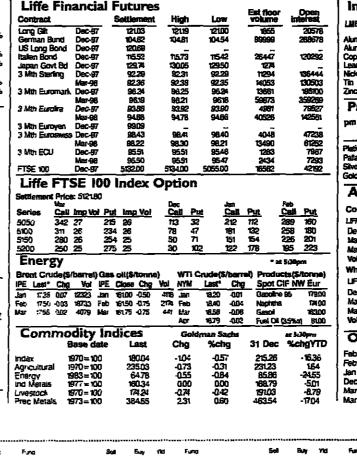
The glossy solicitors' magazine Legal Business has just published its annual Christmas Quiz. The last question reads: "Which City lawyers are known as

- a) Swinging Dick b) Hissing Sid
- c) The Flying Fornicator d) Bedwetting Bob?"
- I can't wait for the answers.

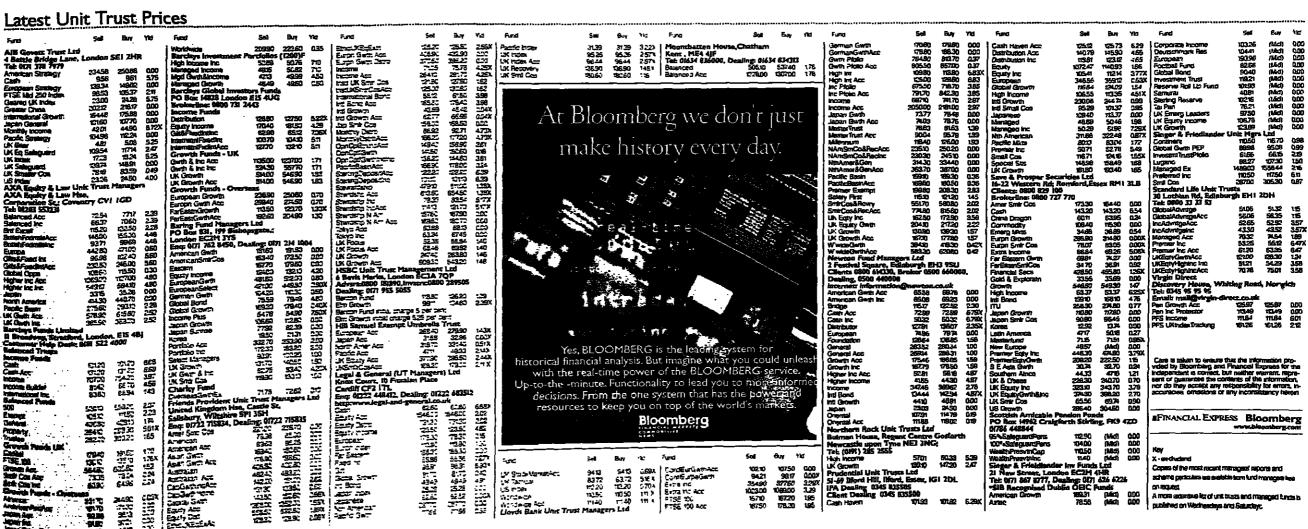
WH Brakspear, the brewing and pub company, has hired David Gyle-Thompson, chairman of Whittard of Chealse, to groom the company for a market listing. Jim Burrows, Brakspear's chief executive, said that mr Gyle-Thompson was the man for the job since he had just led the tea and coffee retailer through its own flotation. Brakspear has also appointed Roger Budd to run its managed estate. Mr Budd and Burrows are old buddies from the days when they both worked for Whitbread.

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Cowboys' era ends as Jets buck trend

The Jacksonville Jaguars went in through the front door and Tampa Bay went in through the back - but two more teams missed their chance to clinch places in the NFL play-offs at the weekend. And, in a remarkable turnaround from the recent past, the Dallas Cowboys are out and the New York Jets are still in.

Four teams had a chance to claim post-season places with victories. Only Jacksonville did so, with a win, 20-14 over the Buffalo Bills.

Mark Brunell threw for 317 yards and a touchdown and ran for a score as the Jaguars secured at least a wild card benth in the AFC.

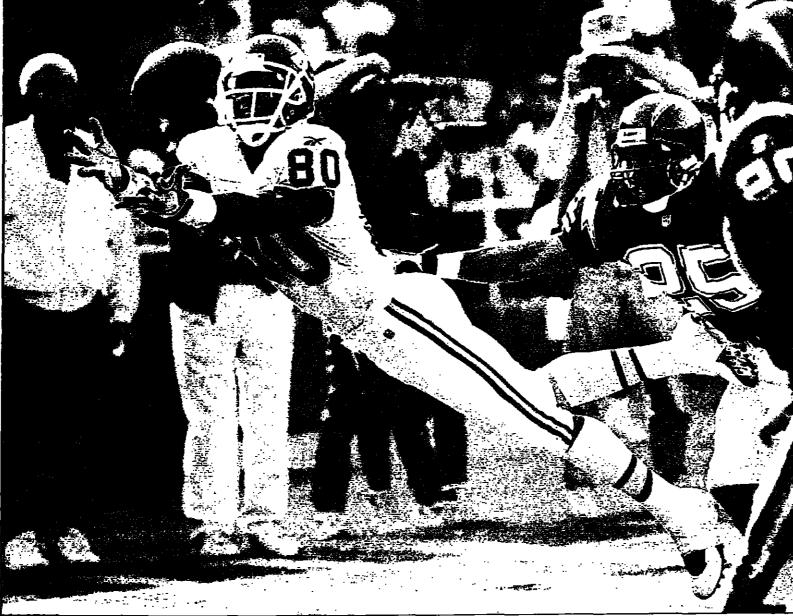
The other three - Tampa Bay, Minnesota and Miami - all went down to defeats, but the Buccaneers were assured of an NFC wild card place when the Super Bowl champions, Green Bay, defeated the Carolina Panthers in a rematch of last year's NFC championship game. Brett Favre threw for 256

yards and three touchdowns in the 31-10 victory as the Packers eliminated the Panthers from play-off contention with one week remaining in the regular

That was good news for the Bucs in the wake of the New York Jets' 31-0 demolition job on them - the Jets' first win in a December game since 1993.

The often-criticised cornerback Otis Smith returned two interceptions for touchdowns as in the Pro Bowl, but they have the Jets-who finished last sea- a young team, we got the jump son 1-15 - regained control of on them and maybe they had a their play-off destiny by joining tough time keeping things in Miami and New England at the top of the AFC East with 9-6 records.

The mokie Leon Johnson returned a second-half kick-off who had lost their previous two games. Bill Parcells' team



Stretching the point: Lake Dawson, of Kansas City, beats the San Diego defense to catch a touchdown pass in the Chiefs' victory

by winning at Detroit on Sunday.

"Tampa Bay has seven guys perspective," Parcells said. They have a young team like us and today was our day."

Cincinnati beat Dallas 31-24, eliminating the Cowboys from 101 yards for a TD for the Jets. play-off contention for the first time since 1990.

Boomer Esiason passed for

can now secure a play-off place 242 yards and two touchdowns as the Bengals crupted for 31 unanswered points and Corey Dillon rushed for 129 yards to become the third Cincinnati rookie to reach 1,000 yards in

> The Cowboys, who had won the last five NFC East titles. rallied for two touchdowns in the fourth quarter to make things interesting, before losing their fourth game in a row. That is Dallas's longest barren spell since losing their last seven games in 1989.

"We played a pretty good ball game, except for the second and third quarters, when it was disastrous," said the Dallas head coach, Barry Switzer, Scott Mitchell's one-yard

touchdown pass to Herman Moore with three seconds left gave the Detroit Lions hope for a possible play-off place with a Vikings, who have now lost five consecutive games.

Jim Harbaugh threw a career-high four TD passes. including three to tight end

Ken Dilger, as the Indianapolis Colts prevented the Miami Dolphins from clinching a playoff place with a 41-0 rout.

Some days everything just goes wrong and this was just one of those days," said the Miami coach, Jimmy Johnson, "This was just an awful game.

Morten Andersen kicked 14-13 victory over the reeling the 25th game-winning field goal of his career, a 33-varder as time expired, to give Atlanta their fifth successive win, 20-17 over Philadelphia.

The outcome extinguished

the Eagles' play-off dreams, and shortly thereafter Atlanta's own flickering hopes were : snuffed out by Detroit's comeback over Minnesota.

The Kansas City Chiefs closed in on home field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs with a 29-7 victory over the San Diego Chargers.

The Baltimore Ravens beat the Tennessee Oilers 21-19 in the last game to be played at 43year-old Memorial Stadium while Chicago beat St Louis 13-10 in a basement battle.

Cup captaincy Can wait says Monte Montgomerie

that Europe's golf authorities should delay naming their Ryder Cup captain until just weeks before the event in the United States in 1999. The Scot believes that is the only way to get the best man at Brookline, Boston.

"There's no reason why we can't delay the decision for months," Montgomerie said yesterday. "We don't need a captain until the event starts. Why do we need one during the qualification system? He won't tell us what to do at that stage. There's no rush.

'We don't have the likes of a Hale Irwin, a Ben Crenshaw or Tom Kite. The Americans have a choice of 10 or 12 of that type of character.

"And while Sam Torrance and Mark James spring to mind, they want to play. It's a terrible thing to take the captaincy and possibly accept that means you're finished as a player. You could tell it hurt Seve Ballesteros. He still wanted to play."

Ballesteros, who led Europe to victory in his home country of Spain in September, has ruled himself out as captain next time, as has Bernhard Langer.

Montgomerie wants a system where the likes of Torrance and James could try to qualify as a player but if they did not, could then take on the reins of the captaincy. The Scot sees himself taking on the role in around eight years' time but first his main aim is to win that elusive major.

Having just won his fifth successive European Order of Merit at the age of 34, he maintains he has finally come to

OVERALL SCORE CALCULATED ON MATCHES PLAYED FROM 8 AUGUST - 14 DECEMBER

Colin Montgomerie believes terms with his reputation as the man with the shortest fuse in golf.

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-I'm learning the hard way that nobody has played the perfect game of golf yet and know I never will," Montgomerie said.

"Nowadays, if I miss a putt, I miss one. We're all human and I know I can possibly win a major with 90 per cent of my game. Players have won majors making mistakes. I can threeputt a green and win a major. I almost have done.

"I used to get upset with myself as I knew I could do better. I just have to accept the bad with the good, which I am doing as I get older."

Whatever he achieves personally, Montgomerie believes golf has a money-laden future as Tiger Woods takes the sport to the level of American baseball and basketball, where the likes of Michael Jordan earn £100m a year.

"There's only one guy in that league at present and that's Woods," Montgomerie said. "But we are all likely to benefit from his success and with US Tour Commissioner Tim Fincham trying to get golfers to earn the same as other top US stars, you'll see a lot more \$1m first prizes in future."

Montgomerie, who won the European Order of Merit for the fifth successive time this year, has the chance of the first \$1m (£620,000) prize of 1998 when he faces the South African Ernie Els in the semifinals of the Andersen Consulting Challenge in Phoenix on

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PHILIPS



Today we publish the updated results of The Independent Fantasy Football League. The player scores are for all League games played until Sunday 14 December. The league table includes all scores up to 7 December. This month's winner is Mr David Lewis from Reading with his team The Magnificent II. A total of 132 points wins him a pair of tickets to England's next home in-

Every time one of your players score you get four points. There are four points for a keeper or a defender every time their team keeps a clean sheet. If a player scores the winning goal, i.e.: if there is a one goal difference in the scoreline, the player scoring the final goal for the winning team is awarded 1 bonus point awarded in addition to standard goal related points. Each successful Assist, a pass judged by our experts to lead directly to a goal, will give a player 3 points. The opinion of our experts on the matter is final. Each player selected and starting a game will be awarded one point.

If a player is given a Yellow Card they lose 1 point, if a player is given a Red Card they lose 3 points. Own goals, either scored or conceded, do not count.

The Premiership Manager that you choose will be awarded 3 points if their real-life team wins, 1 point is awarded if they draw and no points are given if they lose,

Updated player scores and league tables will be published every Tuesday in The Independent and repeated the following Sunday in the Independent on Sunday.



INDEPENDENT FANTASY

LEAGUE TABLE

POS NAME Miss Lisa Wild Mr Archer Mr B Sari Mr D Aston Mr I McCrossa Mr P Tuff Mr D Evans Mr J Cox Mr B Sari Mr I Boyle Mr A Wingrove Mr D Baker Mr S Scott

Mr Brady Mr M Pawley Mr C Thomas Mr K Boyle Mr S Scott Mr I Brown Mr A Choud Mr J Salt Mr I MoCrossa Mr Killerby Mr D Baker Mr G Bell Mr T Brazie

Mr I Cox

Mr P Green

Mr D Arckroyd Mr M Ward

Mr M Rickard

Mr R Sheridan Mr G Ford

Mr S Coulton Mr T Robson

TEAM No Wright 617 617 617 613 613 The Untouchables Billy Boy's 2nd II Washed Up Army Seeking Victory Pins 4 Ups Southville FC Simply The Best Wembley Bundlers Tony's Brace Diana's Demon Deja Vu Unbeatable Look Lively Robert's Rovers Scunthrope Extras 599 598 596 596 596 Clogston Rovers The Dream Team Ruffus Sammy's Soccer Scorchers 596 595 595 One Watt City Washed Up Army Edmo United 594 594 The Killer Bees Secondary Celtic 593 593 Dead Bear Stunning Stunts Wow For Short 593 590 Grimsby's Fish Retro Rovers Powis Rangers

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winner The Grey Monk. However, as the

Greystoke trainer tells Richard Edmondson, he has another live contender for Cheltenham.

If it had not been for the popular vote on May Day you could have been excused for believing this was a grey year. The hue has certainly been hugely advantageous this National Hunt season.

The Grey Monk.

RACING'S FUTURES MARKET

King George VI Chase (3m)

100-30

33-1

Each-way a fifth the odds, places, 1, 2, 3 (Kempton, Friday, 26 December)

Bells Life, 10t/2 lengths third to Senor El Betrutti in the 2m5f Tripleprint Gold Cup Handicap Chase at Cheltenham on Saturday, is 10-1 with Ladbrokes -William Hill offer just 6-1 - for the Welsh National.

Senor El Betrutti is 20-1 with

One Man (G Richerds

Stray Bay (C Bracks)

Barton Bank (D Micholson

Senor El Betrutti (Mrs & Nocki

Challenger Du Luc (M Pips)

Rough Cover (T Cossy)

Disadelini (F Dournery Fr)

RESULTS

and Senor El Betrutti has completed an auspicious double in the Murphy's and Tripleprint Gold Cups. Gordon Richards is fairly grey too, and he has proin the shape of One Man and

at Haydock, has several options could run either back at New-Leopardstown, where he other good races for him."

the Tote for the King George VI

Chase - Coral go 10-1. Rough

Quest is 14-1 with the Tote -

William Hill go 8-1 - after his

second to The Grey Monk in

the Tommy Whittle Chase at

lan Davies

5-8

20-1

20-1

25-1

into the surface there next March it will be no-go. The nine-year-old still has a

greater chance of appearing at Prestbury Park than the trainer's vided two like-matted winners name horse, One Man. Festival spectators will be lucky to see him at all. "The grey horse cer-The Grey Monk, Saturday's tainly won't be in the Gold Cup Tommy Whittle Chase winner and whether he'll go to Cheltenham at all I don't know," for his next encounter. He Richards said yesterday. "It's ton-le-Willows, Cheltenham or the Queen Mother [Champion in the Hennessy Gold Cup at Chase] as there are plenty of

Welsh National Hand

messages that Richard Dunwoody, his rider, receives are

RICHARD EDMONDSON NAP: Cheeky Charlie (Folkestone 2.30) NB: Master Mario (Hereford 3.10)

somewhat different. The jockey suggests the horse stops himself in the closing stages as only 50-50 that we'll run him in he anticipates grave physical discomfort should he carry on.

| f | | may be sens what the dis | |
|-------|-----------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| ic | ap Chase | (3m 5f 116 | lyds) |
| si is | Wilden HB | Cardacima | Total Vision |

| | , (,, | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-----|--|--|--|
| Horse (Trainer/weight) | Corsi | Wildem HE | Lactoroles | Tot | | | |
| Cyborgo (M Pipe/11st/30) | 7-1 | 7-1 | 5-1 | 6- | | | |
| Indian Tracker (M Pipe/10s/12b) | 7-1 | 7-1 | 8-1 | 7- | | | |
| Banjo (D Nichotson/11st11fb) | B-1 | 10-1 | 10-1 | 10- | | | |
| Bells Life (P Hobbs/ftst3b) | B-1 | 6-1 | 10-1 | 9- | | | |
| Samles (P Hobbs/10st1b) | B-1 | 10-1 | 9-1 | 9 | | | |
| What A Hazel (P Nichols/10st6b) | 10-t | 10-1 | 11-1 | 10- | | | |
| Eudipe (M Pipe/11st9b) | 12-1 | 10-1 | 12-1 | 12- | | | |
| Mudahim (Mrs J Pirman/Tishib) | doubthal | 12-1 | 16-1 | 12- | | | |
| . Each way a quarter the odd | fs, piaces, 1, 2 | 3. 4 (Chapston, S | aturday, 27 Decembe | 1 | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

| 1998 Chai | mpion H | urdle (2n | ı IlOyds) | |
|---------------------------|--------------|-------------|------------|------|
| Home (Trainer) | Corai | Willem Hill | Lactorolog | Tota |
| istatyraq (A P O'Bnen/h) | 11-2 | 5-1 | 5-1 | 51 |
| Shedow Leeder (C Egenton) | 17-2 | 6-1 | 7-1 | 61 |
| Make A Stand (M Pipe) | 8-1 | 1D-1 | 8-1 | 7-1 |
| Sermentino (D Nicholson) | 1 2-1 | 12-1 | 10-1 | 10-1 |
| Reflesel (D Nicholson) | 12-1 | 12-1 | 10-1 | 14-1 |
| Collier Bay (J Old) | 16-1 | 10-1 | 10-1 | 14-1 |
| Griness (C Roche/Irl) | 20-1 | 29-1 | 14-1 | 15-1 |
| i'm Supposin (R Roye) | 20-1 | 18-1 | 20-1 | 16-1 |

Each-way a quarter the ooks, places, 1, 2, 3 (Chellenham, Tuesday, 17 March)

lapse as drunkenly as One Man does are not guilty of failing to stay; but are victims of internal bleeding. "The barrier he hits could be in his mind," the jockey observed in a recent Christmas book collaboration with Marcus Armytage, "I always wonder if at Sandown back in January [1996], when he won his

extreme. I know he gave his all. "He was very tired and blew hard. Maybe he went to the limits and just maybe he's not that keen to go there again. He's an

25-1

20-1

11-2

8-1

16-1

20-1

25-1

25-1

8-1

20-1

25 i

ceatch (M Pipe)

Buddy Marvel (D Sherw

Sound Appeal (A Foster

teel Estate (D Nicholson)

The French Purze (M Pipe)

Dorana Pride (M Houngan/M

The Grey Monk (G Richards)

imperiet Call (F Sutherland/M

Addington Boy (G Richards)

Barton Bank (I) Nicholson)

Statty Bary (C Prooks)

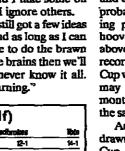
Vent D'Aout (M Pipe)

first King George, he went to the

intelligent enough horse to know where the limit is." There is no limit for Gordon

himself however, and even if he cannot swing through the trees at Greystoke any more he is still going strong at 67. "I still love the old horses you know, you never lose that," he said, "As long as my head keeps working I'll be all right. I hear some of these younger boys with their new ideas and I take some on board and I I ignore others.

"But I've still got a few ideas of my own and as long as I can find someone to do the brawn while I do the brains then we'll go on. You never know it all. You keep learning."



1998 Triumph Hurdle (2m lf) **18-1** 25-1

1998 Cheltenham Gold Cup Chase (3m 2f 110yds) 5-1 6-1 16-1 2-1 20-1 **B**-1 33-1 6 Each way a quarter the ocids, places, 1, 2, 3 (Chetterhern, Thursday, 19 March)

Cheeky Charite showed his appraisation for being stepped up in trip when striking form over course and distance two weeks ago, defeating market leader Cabochon a length and a quarter in a handicap. He hearn't had much racing, so is likely to get better still but TAPPERS KNAPP a preterred Cliver Sherwoods five-year-old ran fifth of 22 behind King Mole in a Hurringdon bumper - his single start lest sesson - and shaped well on his jumping bow in fourth behind Mad Hatter over two and a half miles at Windsoc Tappers Knapp must improve, sepectally over this longer distance. Selatinan, a fair stayer on the level for John Dunlop's stable as a time-year-old, when he scored times times, changed hands for 4000grs at last year's Newmantert Autumn Sales, going to ban Offien. Backed from 18-1 to 4-1 when making his hurding debut here at the end in January, he didn't jump well and was well beaten but did much better on his only other outing when third to Friendship at Windsor the following month. Old Decency, a warning point-to-pointer making his debut under rules, is from Nick Henderson's bang-in form stable.

SHADDOXHURST HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS F) £4,000

FORM GUIDE

Richards: still going strong

Gordon, it seems, will never be divorced from racing, and even when he goes he will probably ensure his final resting place lies where horses' hooves are resounding just: above him. As it stands, his record does not contain a Gold Cup winner, but he believes that may be corrected in three months' time. The identity of

the saviour may surpirse some. Addington Boy was withdrawn on the eve of the Gold Cup last season, and has recovered from tendon trouble. He was as low as 8-1 last March when his sick note was accepted. He is a sound jumper, albeit with no bottom-pinching turn of pace, though his record is seven wins, two seconds and a third from 10 completed starts over fences. He has no enemies among his regular backers.

"Let's not forget about Addington," Richards said. "You only have to look at him to see he has improved since last year. I'm very, very pleased with him." In view of this assessment, 20-1 looks quite plump with William Hill and the advice is to invest some coppers. I have.

McCaig given four-month ban for biting linesman

> Superleague disciplinary chiefs yesterday banned the Newcastle Cobras defender Rob Mc-Caig until 15 April and fined him £1,000 for biting the Cardiff

linesman Moray Hanson on

his right arm last Thursday. The incident occurred late in the Express Cup match and he was originally given a suspension of at least five games for roughing and gross misconduct for physical abuse of an official. But the league reviewed video evidence of the incident and decided that McCaig, a Canadian making his fifth appearance for the team, should be punished more severely. The British Ice Hockey Association has supported the judgement, ensuring that McCaig will not be eligible to play in any other British competition this season.

Sheffield Steelers' bruising battle with Nottingham Panthers on Sunday night is to be investigated by the disciplinary committee following a mass brawl which led to seven players being dismissed.

Punches were exchanged following a bench clearance in the third period with Steelers 4-0 down to Nottinghain Panthers at the Sheffield Arena. Three home players - Corey Beaulieu, Scott Allison and Mike Ware - were dismissed by the referee Mike Rowe along with Panthers' Jeff Sebastian and Kraig Nienhuis.

Rowe dismissed both teams to their dressing-rooms for five minutes to cool off, but when play resumed, the Steelers captain, Rob Wilson, clashed with Derek Laxdal and both players were also ejected. A record 301 Superleague penalty minutes were handed out with Panthers going on to win 5-0. The previous record was 192 minutes.

The Steelers manager, Alex Dampier, said: "Sticks got up around the net and the next thing I knew, things had started. I felt they left the bench before we did. It's a bad thing to happen when you're losing. We'll get some suspensions out of it and deservedly so."

A Superleague spokesperson said: "All the video evidence will be studied, but everything depends on the referee's report. Once everything is collated it will then be sent to Richard Boprey [director of sport] and the disciplinary committee."

Brown's saves make it easier for Eastcote

Eastcote, leaders in the ESL South Premier, returned to winning form in their last game before the Christmas break with a 3 - 2 win at Bournemouth where they owed much to goalkeeper Dan Brown for a string of fine saves, including at a penalty

stroke with the score at 1-1. A penalty corner goal from Danny Geach set Eastcote on their way in the 10th minute, but although Nick Lygo-Baker quickly equalised, Jon Curtis put the Middlesex side back in the lead before the interval. The former Cambridge University captain Adrian Carter put them further ahead before Tim Stainer pulled a goal back for Bournemouth to set up a worrying final 10 minutes for East-

cote. Tim Prior, with a well-timed hat-trick, inspired High Wycombe to a 3-1 win away at Ramgarhia and, with Chichester being held to a 3-3 draw at Tunbridge Wells, into second place. City of Portsmouth were in goalscoring mood against newly promoted Purley with a 7-3 win which took them into third

Purley, who swept all before them last season to win promotion, have found the going particularly tough in the Premier where they have been badly handicapped by the retirement of Paddy Osborn, their goalscorer, who has a wrist injury. He joined them last vear from Reading after he had been the first to 150 National League goals.

Stuart Avery was again on form for Portsmouth with a hattrick, while Richard Penrose and Rob Boswell both scored two goals each.

- Bill Colwill

FOLKESTONE

20-1

161

NEWCASTLE 12.40: 1. NOBLE NORMAN (P Niven) 66-1; 2. Totn's River 12-1; 3. Ardent Scout 3-1 73 ran, 8-1 tav Hopeful Lord (4th), Nr. 12 (Mrs M Reveley, Salthum), Toths 19:20; 533() 6250, 5120, 07: 536,70 CSF: 562949.

Tric: 55680.

1.15: 1. RADICAL CHOICE (B Storey)
5-1; 2. Purevalue 5-4 far; 3. Miscle Of Store)
20-1 9 mm. Dist, 22. (J Chartfon, Stocksfield).
Rote: 5950; 2180; 2160; 2380; DF: 1550; CSF:
125-4 fino: 54820.

1.45: 1. DAN DE MAN (M Foster) 8-1; 2. Caracteria Charter 4: 12. Empressed come 3: 4.

1.45: 1. DAN DE MAN (M Foster) 6-1; 2. General's Orders 14-1; 2. Boyzontoows 3-1 10 ran. 9-4 fav Common Sound (4th), 8, 7. (Mas I. Sichal, Taclesster). Poles 2940; 22-70, 22-40, 21-50. DF: 24-0th. CSF: 278-02. Tricest: 2277-32. Tric: 274-30.
2.15: 1. DOUBLE AGENT (P Carberry) 2-1 fav; 2. Genet Baseby 5-1; 3. Marchant Ming 5-1 Gran. Nr. 1, (I M Johnson, Chook). Total: 23-30; 21-20; 22-90. DF: 28-20. CSF: 21077.
2.50: 1. CORSTON JOKER (R Supple)

2.50: 1. CORSTON JOKER (R Supple) Swens tax; 2. Crosshot 4-1; 3. Kemmore-Speed 4-1, 4 ran. 2½, dist. (I. Lungo, Car-rutherstown). Tota: £180. DF: £3.50. CSF: \$465. 3.20: 1. ALPINE PANTHER (P. Niven) 6-4; 3. Martines 6.4 fax; 3. Doorte Strategies

25-1. 12 ram. 4, 2 (Mrs M Helvery, Samurin. Tota: 5186; 5120; 5130, 5570 OF; 5480 CSF; 5585 Trio: 57280 Placepot: 57570, Quadroot: 51230 Place 6: 55644. Place 5: 51237.

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NEWTON ABBOT

12.30: 1. WELL TIMED (J Prost) 6-1; 2. Thursday Night 9-2; 3. Robins Pride 6-1. 9 rest. 2-1 fav Indian Arrow (4th). Hd. 13. (R Prost). Tota: 53:0; 51:90, 51:50, 52:20. DF: 51:30. CSF: 52:185. Tricest: £154.89. Tric: 52:17

58170. 1.09: 1, SUNLEY SECURE (Mr S Durack) 3-1; 2, Perfect Pel 11-1; 3, Alpine Joicer 4-1 11 ran. 9-4 fav Vitineste Smoothie (4th), 2'/s, 5, (Noel T Chance), Tote: 5310: 5120. 5290, 5230. DF: 63030. CSF: 22968. Tricast

2230. DF: \$3030. CSF; £2868. Indest: £2420. This: \$4230.

1.36: 1. SUPREME LADY (J. F. Tripy) evens fav.; 2. Pearl's Cholen 7-1; 3. Fortytwork fav.; 2. Pearl's Cholen 7-1; 3. Fortytwork fav.; 2. Pearl's Cholen 7-1; 3. Fortytwork fav.; \$190; £130; £140; £280. DF: £730. CSF; £828. This: £1650, 206: 1. HOLD YOUR RANKS (J. Frost) 2.1 fav.; \$100; £1500; £1500; £1400; \$100; £15000; £15000; £15000; £15000; £15000; £15000; £15 2-1 fav; 2-Red Lighter 9-4; 3. Jalibreaker 7-1 8 ran. 5, 21 (R Frost), Totec 5380; \$180, \$10, \$180, \$0P; \$420, \$\$F; \$682, Tricast \$2280.

2280.

2.40: 1, BELMOREBRUNO (A P McCoy)
4.5 fav. 2. Sexon Duke 5-2: 3. Spirit Level
20-1.7 ran. 11/. 18. (M Pipe). Tota: 2:170;
2:10, 2:18: 05: 2:20. CSF: 2:28:
3.10: 1. EFFECTUAL (S Kely) 7-2: 2. Kerr
Risk 7-4; 3. Eastidon Gold Dust 16-1.5 ran.
6-5 tav Galapino. Del, diet (Méss V Williams).
Rote: 0:47: 2:10: 2:20. DF: 3:40, CSF: 2:96:
3.40: 1. MISTER SAMPHOVITCH (A P
McCoy) 8-11 fev. 2. Nice Approach 15-2; 3.
Cur Mein Fiir 9-1. 12 ran. 5, 11/. (Mess Versete Williams). Tota: 2:170; 2:30, 2:250, 2:140.
DF: 2:150. CSF: 2:554. NP: Winning Town.
Tro: 2:380.

Tro: £950. Placepot: £1250. Quadpot: £260. Place 6: £1955. Place 5: £686. WARWICK

12.20: 1. VIRTUOSO (R Dunwoody) 13-8 fav; 2. Keen Dancer 12-1; 3. Tough Act 5-1; 20 ran. 5.7. (C Marn, Lambourn), Tota: 52-20; 5130, 5550, 5210, DF: 52120, CSF: 51860. Tro: 5550, MR: Bisquet-De-Boucha, Rambow Star, Rambow Star, Rambow Star, Rambow Star, 43-paiss to all bets, declarated orders. Auta 4 applies to all bets, declarated or 45 no. 18 e. Dound. Union Creats Fuel & Spherical States of Charles of Charles Spherical States of Communication (Mr K R CRyen) 5-1; 2. Stream 9-2; 3. Shepherds Rest. 11-16 Fint. 11-8 Res Vet Again (Sth.) Nr. nk. (C Mann, Lamboum). Total: 26-30; £2-30, £1-30. DF: \$1.30. CSF: £2-246.

PAJO CSF: 22345.

1.26: 1. IDEAL PARTNER (M A FROJER-alt) 15: 1; 2. Herhorse 5: 1; 3. Man Of The Match 5: 8 ran. evers fav Derham Hill (M). Shild, die, (P Nichols: Shepton Mallet), Tota-CTISC: £170, £170, £170, DF: £1080, CSF:

CTISC: £170, £170, £170, DF: £1080, CSF: £7838.

1.56: 1, WITAMAN (R Farrari) 15-2; 2, Line Of Conquest 11-4 km; 3, Charmer's Well 50-1 9 mm, Nk, cist. (Nrs J Pitman, Upper Lambourn). Rio: 56-460.

2.30: 7, E960 FLOW (M A Fizzperski) 7-4 km; 2, Nickids Jon 25-1; 3, Larry's Lord 9-4 5-mm, 3, 2 (7 Casse, Upper Lambourn). Tota: £270: £150 £290 DF: £2370, CSF: £2334.

3.00: 1, COOL SPERMS (A Thornton) 14-1; 2, Nices Brackinell 14-1, 3, Tarwny Warbler 25-1 16 mm, 11-10 faw Melody Maid (Ri), 8, 3, (Capt 1 Foreite, Downton). Tota: £1550; 9440, £260 £530, DF: £5030, CSF: £17238.

Tho: D£280; \$67259 carried forward (Melon)

This 92380, 20739 carried forward in February 3.40 ctolsy.
3.30: 1. ERNEST WILLIAM (Michael Brannary 30-1; 2.1 Recult 7-1; 3. Young Ty-coon 50-1; 4. Ele-the-Mou 9-1 18 ran. 5-2 fay Shatimann, 13, hd. (G. Huchard, Woodhidge, Tolse 1980, 1380 CTU 17:200 C230.
05: 20840, CSF: 27807; Tenast C35685 Trio: C157240; 234440 carried forward to Herbitation School, 180 word; 2154128 carried forward to Followshop Index.

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HYPERION 12.30 Come On Penny (nb) 2.30 Tappers Knapp 1.00 Northern Village 3.00 FRIENDLY KNIGHT (nap)

2.00 Angelo's Double Counse: Hurdie course - Good; Chasa course - Good (Good to Firm in places).

● Right-hand, undulating course with a run-in of one furiong.

● Course is 8m W of town off A20 Westerhanger station (service from London, Charling Cross) adjoins course. ADMISSION: 29 (under-16s free). CAR PARK: Free.

● LEADING TRAINERS: J Gifford 16-62 (25%). D Grissell 10-61 (63%), N Henderson 8-23 (348%), R Alner 6-32 (188%), R Rows 6-58 (107%), P Wintworth 4-9 (444%).

● LEADING JOCKEYS: M A Fitzgerald 10-44 (227%), D Bridgewitz 8-20 (30%), N Williamson 6-39 (16.%), A P Miccoy 6-42 (14.9%), B Farrion 6-23 (21.7%), S McNelli 5-28 (17.9%).

● FAVOURITIES: Favourities: 99-231 (42.9%).

BLINKERED FIRST TIME: One More Main (300).

LEVY BOARD HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,000

| 1 | ΙL | 12.10 | added 2m 1f 110yds Penalty Value \$2,301 | |
|---|----|--------|--|----------------|
| 1 | 1 | 5-7721 | AMSI SOIT IL (FFI) (10) (C) (A-Men Partnersho) G McCourt 5 11 13 | D Bridgwater P |
| 1 | 2 | 2245-1 | AUGUST TWELFTH (12) (CD) (D C O'Brien) D O'Brien 9 ti 1 | |
| | 3 | OF645 | FERRERS (272) (D) (BF) J L Burg Mrs P Sy 6 71 0 | W Warstoo |
| | 4 | 012-45 | MUSEUM (10) (CD) (BF) (A Barber & R Blake) P Winkworth & 11 0 | |
| | 5 | | COME ON PENNY (6) (A E Frost) D Gendulfo 6 10 13 | |
| 1 | 5. | | STORM TIGER (17) (R F Parmenthip) S Malter 6 10 7 | |
| | 7 | PROPS/ | LITTLE NOO (586) (C) (C) Rollet J R Best 8 10 (L | 2 Thombre |

All All Andrews and the second of the second in March and he might prove the pick of the part this time. Come On Penny, a faller Wind-sor next time, was well beaten in the selection's race at the same track before running second to Secret Citit at Leacestec Storm Tiger, successful at Windsor in March, will be straighter for his Warwick run – his first outing since. Selection: AUGUST TWELFTH

1.00 HEATHFIELD HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS E) £6,500 added 3m 2f Penalty Value £4,625 ### SUPPLET ON THE PENNING WHITE ENGLISH

SUPPLET ON THE PENNING PENNING

Toked well the combination out of the period of the period

1.10 COWSLIP SELLING HURDLE (CLASS G) \$2,400 added 2m 1f

1.40 THYME HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS F) £4,000 added 2m 3f

Special Community of the Second Secon

2.10 CARAWAY NOVICE HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS E) 54,200 added 2m

2502 WISTUNG BUCK (12) (3) \$ 12467 3 2

| 1.30 | SELLINDGE CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS H'CAP HURDLE (CLASS F) £3,000 added 2m 6f 110 yds Penaity Value £2,364 |
|--------|---|
| | EURO FORDAI (15) (CD) (John Dursdon) J Giford 5 12 0 S Laird (6) OURSTADUAY (10) (RF) (D I Bare) J Malins 5 10 2 Deptd Rumer (6) |
| 31P-U4 | MRLIMOUNT (13) (CD) (Corrny Breen) T McGovern 7 10 11 R Thompon B SLEEPTITE (PR) (19) (Christopher Shirley Brasher) Mss H Knight 7 10 8 J |
| F111-2 | CARACOL (18) (C) (C G Bollon) J Neville 8 10 7 |
| 10P4P | MOST WELCOME NEWS (20) (A S Reci) G L Moore 5 to 3 |

7 1074/F KNEEF (72) (H J S Heprig H Curts 5 10.0 Perhibdure (3)
8 6/0-PP SURIGICAL SPIRIT (84) (B Lee) B Peace 7 10 0. J Goldstein (3)
- 8 declared Marinum weight: 10st. True handicap weights: Kreef 9st 10th, Surgical Spirit 7st 10th.
BETTING: 5-2 Millimount, 3-1 Dutstaguay, 7-2 Euro Forum, 5-1 Caracol, 9-1 Sleeptine, 20-1 Most Welcoma Navas, 33-1 Kreef, 66-1 Surgical Spirit

1996 No corresponding rice FORM GUIDE

Euro Forum, a maiden on the Flat, opened his hundling account over course and distance two weeks ago after firshing a two-length numer-up behind Sharur at Windsor on his return. Josh Gifford's charge is on 25st for his handcap debut but he goes for this which is not the greatest of rices – in printerence to the novices hundle and might provide most danger to QUISTAQUAY, who gets 18th. Winner of a Lingfield burnper last seesond, outing of the season, following with a length-and-e-half second to Native Shore (who has since completed a nap hand) at Leicester – the pair 19 lengths clear. True, Quistaquay Ripoped when Exountie for the race won by Jet Flies on a return to Towcester but that was too bad to be true and she looks worth another chance. Millimount, a course and distance scorer in February, was burnped and unseased at the first at Windsor last month on his reappearance and will be fifter for his recent Fontwell run behind None Stirred. Caracol wound up last seeson with a hat-truck and will be sharper for his opening nine-length Sangor second behind Riverbank Rose 18 days ago. Selection: QUISTAQUAY

2.00 TOTE NOVICE CHASE (QUALIFIER added 2m 5f Penalty Value £4.450

| | action Sill of Length saline 14,400 |
|--------------|--|
| ⊞ 144 | WHO AM I (21) (D) (BF) (H Wellstead) R Alner 7 tl 5 |
| /2/26 | ANGELO'S DOUBLE (17) (D) (J Harwood) A Buckler 9 to 12 |
| FOSP 6 | BENLII (13) (A A W Jackson) T Casey 6 10 12 |
| | CHINA MAIL (121) (The Merin Syndicate) J Bennett 5 to 12 |
| P4P-62 | DARRING KING (15) (Cleave Stables) M Bolton 7 to 12 T Descombs |
| 13-23P | KILLEANEY CARR (13) (Mess J Sample) J Carlord 6 10 12 P Hide |
| | SIR DANTE (12) (BF) (Peter R Wiley) R Rowe 8 to 12 |
| | SLEETMORE GALE (21) (D O Walsh) T McGovern 7 t) 7 JA McCarthy |
| | = 8 dectared = |

BETTING: 15-8 Angelo's Double, 9-4 Sir Dante, 13-2 Who Am L, 9-1 Daring King, 12-1 Sleetmore Gale, 14-1 Killetaney Carr, 16-1 China Mail, 33-1 Benji 1996 Merni, 5 10 12 C Maude 9-1 (Mrs A Permit) 10 ran

FORM GUIDE

SIR DANTE, who ended last season completing a hurdles hat-finds, looks a chaser but was let down by his jumping on his tending debut at Windsor, finishing seventh of eight behind Nashville Star. However, he will have learned from that and can show the way home this time. Angelo's Doubbe, a former useful long-distace handloap hurdler, has also been let down by his jumping falling times out when leading and going easily in Flight Leatenant's race at Newbury in March. Bob Buckler's nurser earlier finished section behind Gitter lisle at Lingfield and wound up last term by finding Lively Knight 23 lengths too good at Pumpiton, where he was 15-8 on and was the only other to finish. Angelo's Double was tailed off behind Go-informal over hurdles at Newbury 17 days ago but that with have helped to put him right and he looks a big danger Darling King. 12 lengths clear of the third when beaten seven lengths by Antonio Manano in a two-miler here two weeks ago, will be more at home over this longer journey.

Setection: SIR DANTE

2.30 LYMPNE NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,000 added

| _ | | 211 of 1 toyus reliaity value 22,490 | |
|---|--------|---|-----------------|
| | 054-61 | CHEEKY CHARLIE (15) (CD) (Pril Colins) G L Moore 5 TI 5 D | Gallagher |
| | FFF15 | | Bridgwater |
| | 42:00 | CHARLE HAWES (20) (Siver Knight Exhibitors Ltd) S Melor 8 10 12 (| Webb (5) |
| | 33-5 | FRN BEC (57) (A A rúsg) A P Jones 4 10 12 | \$ McNeil |
| 1 | 42. | LORD ELLANGOWAN (F301) (Elangowan Partiers: A Ingram 4 to 12 19 1 | Thornson B |
| | 5 | MORGANS HILL (41) Mars Jean A Serropi Q Sherwood 5 10 12 | Llewellyn |
| | F1- | OLD DECENCY (324) (Motest Backburn) N herberson 6 to 12 M A | Fezgerald |
| | | | Качаладһ |
| 1 | ಜ. | | G Bradley |
| 3 | | SMART GUY (277) : Lits P's Donlan) Mrs : Jewer 5 to 12 | D Leahy |
| • | 5-4 | | McCarthy |
| 2 | 25-2 | BE MY MOT (7) in Windresser & Son) D Gressel 5 TO 7 | B Femion |
| | | = 12 declared ~ | |

BETTING: 9-4 Cheeky Charile. 100-30 Old Decency. 4-1 Tappers Knapp, 7-1 Salaman. 16-1 Fin Boc, 12-1 Morgans Hill, 20-1 Be My Mot, Cash For Bash, 33-1 others 영화은 주요는 Cless 및 1) 및 본 수 주교업무리는 5-1 (T Casey) 및 ran

3.00 SHADDUXHURS I HANDUS STATE

Friendly Knight refused to race at Catterick in January and and repeated the errors at Ayr in April. He won at Hesham in March and at Windsor on his reappearance when Pegamarine and Fichal (who were first and third in this a year ago separated by 10% lengths) firished a long way betind. Friendly Knight might tollow up if in a co-operative mood but I prefer COURT MASTER, His only win fast term, at Newton About, was in a poor hast but so is this, and he ran several other good races, including when beaten a head by Grooving at Exeter. Court Master was pulled up before two out over timber at Newbury 18 days ago but will be sharper for the outing.

Selection: COURT MASTER

| 3 | .30 | WEATHERBYS 'STARS OF TOMORROW' OPEN NH FLAT RACE £1,500 added 2m 1f 110yds Penalty Value £1,256 |
|----|------|--|
| 1 | 301/ | POINTED REMARK (581) (Peter S Winfeld) N Henderson 6 11 11 |
| 2 | | ANNIMARINAN (C G H Syndicate) T Casey 5 11 4 |
| 3 | | BILLY MOONSHINE (Graham Haupt) D Gressel 5 ti 4 |
| 4 | | CHAR'S PROPILES (Exterior Profiles Utd) Miss K George 4 11 4 |
| 5 | 0- | CLOUDY BILL (220) (M J Howard) Mess H Knight 5 TI 4 |
| В | | COUGAR RUN (Mrs Came Zetter-Wells) L Wells 5 11 4 |
| 7 | 26- | DITOPERO (399) (SF) (The Disopero Partnership) R Buckler 5 ti 4 B Powell |
| 8 | | HERONSHILL (Harry Hawkins Partnership) L A Dace 5 Ti 4 |
| 9 | | MERRY SHOT (Robert & Exors Late Etzabeth Hitchins) Mrs J Pitman 5 11 4R Fatzent |
| 40 | 002. | MUALLAF (251) (Mrs Arm Woodrow) Mrs A Woodrow 5 11 4 A Thornton |
| TÎ | | TAKE IT EASY (B T Stewert-Brown) O Sherwood 5 tt 4 A McCarthy |
| 12 | | MAYBE LATER (Mrs K M Curtis) R Curtis 5 to 13 |
| | | - 12 declared - |

— 12 CHEARMON —
BETTING: 5-2 Pointed Remark, 7-2 Take H Say, 11-2 Meny Shot, 7-1 Musilet, 8-1 Dispero, 12-1
Cloudy Bill, 14-1 Ammerimen, 16-1 Billy Moonshine, 20-1 others
1996 Gudo 5 11 4 N Willemson 12-1 (Mass V Williams) 17 ren

POINTED REMARK has not been seen since landing a similar race by four lengths at Uttosater 19 months ago. However, with his stable trying, the six-year-old will be fit and he can make a successful return. Take it Easy, a 35000gns purchase, makes his debut but might be the one to cause Pointed Remark most trouble. Mustleft, unplaced on his two preceding races, showed improved form when beaten six lengths by Diamond Hill at Chepstow in April but is without an outing since.

Selection: POINTED REMARK Cheltenham's clerk of the course, Philip Arkwright, has defended the siting of the track's burdles after an attack by Jenny Pitman's assistant and husband, David Stait. Pitman's yard lost Mentmore Towers at Cheltenham on Friday after the gelding broke a shoulder at the second-last flight of the Gold Card Handicap Hurdle. Stait called for the Cheltenham executive to consider resiting the penultimate (downhill) hurdle. Arkwright said: "The siting of hurdles at Cheltenham and at other undulating courses is a challenge. We are restricted by the necessity of allowing for the bypassing of obstacles but 1 am happy that the hurdles are in the best possible position."

THE PLAY GAMES (USA) (27) (CD) Files 9 to 3 G Hogan (3) Files 9 to 3 C Hogan (3) Files 9 to 3 C HEREFORD

HYPERION - 9 declared -SETTING: 5-2 Play Games. 7-2 Astral Invasion, 4-1 The Secret Grey, 9-2 Bold Acre, 10-1 Verde Lune, 12-1 Whistling Buck, 18-1 others 1.10 Jaquies Gien 1.40 Jason's Boy 2.10 The Secret Grey 2.40 Wadada 3.10 Torduff Express 2.40 ROSEMARY HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS D) £3,800 added 2m 1f 3.40 Hit The Bid GOING: Good.

© Right-hand course with 300yds run-tr.

© Course is N of city on A49. Hereford station 1m. ADMISSION:
Cuth 512 Referents 153; Course Enclosure 55 CAR PARIC Pres.

© LEADING TRAINERS: W Pipe 34-96 (347%) N Twiston-Davies 53-96 (271%), N Hendenton 11-30 (457%). P Hobbs 15-35 (22%)

© LEADING JOCKEYS: A P McCoy 25-85 (315%), R Dummody 14-56 (255%), M A Fitzgarald 11-48 (225%), N Williamson 9-51 (57%).

© LEADING JOCKEYS: A P McCoy 25-85 (315%), R Dummody 14-56 (255%), M A Fitzgarald 11-48 (225%), N Williamson 9-51 (57%).

BLANKERED FIRST TIME: None.

CLASS D) E3,800 added 2m 17

CLASS D) E3,800 added 2m 17

POLALE SECRET (278) (D) Michael 20 AP McCoy B

2-2-20 PROZEPIGHTER (21) (D) E Levelyn 6 m 10

Michael Brantan (3)

2-2-20 WADADA (17) D Burtel 6 m 17

4-52-20 BON YOYAGE (19) (D) P Hoods 5 m 5 B Durmoody B

5-52-20 SIBERIAN MYSTIC (17) (D) P (Augray 4 m 2 C Maude

2-20-20 HO-JUC (18) (D) G Jarray 7 m 0 V Samery

7-52-20 HIGH LOW (118) (D) I Jarres 9 m C Miss E J Jones (7)

8-20-20 MORNAX LAD (77) (D) II Meast 9 f 0 N Williamson

-8 declared
BETTING: 15-8 Pormus Street, 7-2 Syberian Myssic, 11-2 Wadada, 6-1

Bon Moyaga, 8-1 Mys Low Prizelighter, 14-1 Normar Lad, 16-1 Ho-D

3.10 COMFREY MAIDEN CHASE (CLASS E) £3,600 added 3m 1f 110yds

275. At SAISH (867) N. Crance 9 m 5
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275. AT SAISH (867) N. SAISH (86

3.40 CLOVES CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS NOVICE HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS F) 52,600 added 2m 3f 110yds

27-28 LORD NITROGEN (11) (D) (BF) 5 Sewery: 7 11 10

Fig. 1 Care approximate the response wagers. After, Proxist 12th Tudo Trun St. 150 Caste Brick 50 To BETTANS: 1907 The Plying Dector 5-2 Lord Norogen, 11-2 Moonlighter 5-1 Tangar, 7-1 Hills Gamble, 8-1 Castle Arrow, Hit The Bid. 12-1 Stu-do Thing, 20-1 others

MUSSELBURGH

12.45 Baher 1.20 Royal York 1.50 Little Duke 2.20 Ballyline 2.50 Master Bavard 3.20 Nigel's

GÖING: Good.

■ Right-hand oval course with right turns.
■ Course is 5m E of Edinburgh on A1, Bus link from Edinburgh station 5m, ADMISSION: Club Et2; Tathersals 28 (CAPs and unimployed 23). Accompanied under 165 free CAR PARKE Free.
■ LEADING TRAINERS: M Hammond 27-105 (23.7%), J H Johnson 5-5 (28.9%) is Montation 26-64 (28.9%), S Bacabourne 0-81 (22.9%).
■ LEADING JOCKEYS: B Storey 13-108 (11.9%), P Niven 12-80 (20%), P Carborry 0-34 (29.9%), B Garritry 10-44 (22.7%), T Reed 9-84 (10.7%).
■ FAVOURITES: 103-244 (42.2%).
BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Uk Hyglane (visored) (2.50), Wild Brook (visored) (2.50), Wild Brook (visored) (2.50).

12.45 SEA HOLE SELLING H'CAP HURDLE (CLASS G) 52,800 added 2m

Minonum wegte: 10st. True hand/cap weg/th: Feradlyr Sst 12th, Spring Loaded Sct 11th, My Ecotors 5st 1b: BETTING: 2-1 Trientium, 11-4 Phalarope, 7-2 Feradlyr, 5-1 Bathet, 8-1 Spring Loaded, 10-1 The Sharrow Legend, 12-1 My Godson 1.20 BATHING COACH NOVICE CHASE (CLASS E) £4,200 added 3m

21 P40 FOREVER GREY (24) (D) J H Jornson 5 10 6 K Johnson

9 declared –
SETTING: 11-10 Shanavogh, 11-8 Royal York, 10-1 Collisions Boy, 12-1
Forever Grey, 16-1 Persons Green Boy, 20-1 The Energiese, 25-1 Crotton
Lake, Esgimau, 58-1 Hya Prim The jump wakey Brain Harding returns at Musschargh today. He has been forced to sit on the sidelines for a year after usuaming head injuries in a fall at Newcrete. A mandatory pe-

1.50 TABLE MAIDEN HURDLE (CLASS E)

2.20 MUSSELBURGH LINKS HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS D) £5,100 added 2m 4f

2.50 HOLE ACROSS HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS F) £3,800 added 2m

3.20 GAS HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS D) £4,000 added 3m

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screaming reason upones in a rail at recovering A manusary per resist of 12 m with soft was improved by the Juckey Club because Harding was thought to have suffered an epikeptic fit.

- 5 decimed --BETTING: 9-4 Ballyline, 11-4 Wayephill, 7-2 Montrava, 9-2 Wise Advice,

BETTING: evens Niger's Lad, 8-2 Starr's Your Men, 100-30 Linisthert, 13-2 Major Harris, 20-1 Cattey

Ferguson's revealing insights put him on top of another tree

of activity. Managers throwing cups and punching centre-forwards, hard-man centre-halves nutting the wall to psyche themselves up, team joker adding itching powder to the goalkeeper's jock-strap. Not any more, it would appear. Judging by the amount of "diary of a season" books and autobiographies coming out everybody is sitting qui-each author (and his ghost) preetly tapping away on a laptop or making notes in long-hand.

It won't be long before a typical entry reads: "Spoke to Chopper and Nasher. They're each doing 500 words a day and I think I'm falling behind. We divvied up the tales. I'll do Bazzer's night in wider audience. The Manches-

Dressing-rooms used to be a hive the cells, Chopper's writing about ter United manager is provoca-Vinnie's prank with the chair-tive, thoughtful and revealing. man's wig and Nasher's explaining all the nicknames."

> Among those on the market this Christmas are diaries by Alex Ferguson, Brian McClair, Neville Southall and Garry Nelson. All, thankfully, are better than Alan Shearer's Mogadon effort a couple of years ago with pared to voice an opinion. Mc-Clair's, though well-written and often funny, is largely of interest to Celtic and Manchester United fans while Southall's is primarily for Evertonians. Ferguson's and Nelson's deserve a

This is a man at the centre of the game, who takes an interest in every nook and cranny of Britain's biggest club and is happy to reveal as much as the club's lawyers will allow.

Nelson's is written from the opposite end of the game. It details a season as player-coach at Torquay. Though the writing is sometimes twee the content is as absorbing as Ferguson's. In one passage he spends ages looking for a lost ball in the bushes as Torquay cannot afford to replace it - Ferguson, he reflects, is unlikely to have the same problem.

Another fresh treatment is Chelsea fans have a choice of

THE BIG NAMES BY GLENN MOORE

Christmas reading. Last season is recorded in minute detail in another diary, written by Harry Harris but misleadingly designed to suggest authorship by Ruud Gullit, and there are contrasting autobiographies by Alan Hudson and Pat Nevin. Hudson's is an entertaining if breathtakingly conceited recollection of his playing and partying. Nevin's is self-deprecating, thoughtful and original being written in conjunction with a psychiatrist.

glittering career was split into two parts by the Hungarian uprising of 1956. The football academic Rogan Taylor and a Hungarian partner have produced a fascinating account of his life and times.

There ought to be enough material in Dave Bassett's career for an exceptional book but Harry's Game, a ghosted autobiography, is not it. Of most interest to Sheffield United fans (seven years at Bramall Lane get 123 pages, 13 years at Wimbledon get 33) it could have done with more tales and less match details. The best chapter concerns Watford as it shows

wife's reaction when Elton John came to call to offer him the Watford job is well told, as is the unpleasant way it went wrong. This year's big autobiogra-

phy is, of course, Kevin Keegan's but his version of recent Magpie history is but part of a small cottage industry. Newcastle journalist Alan Oliver has written a sympathetic eyewitness account of his management years and Keegan is also one of three football "characters" profiled in a series of stockingfillers from Goal magazine. Charlie Nicholas, like Keegan, is given a readable rehash of the cuttings file but Mickey Thomas

accorded Ferenc Puskas, whose Bassett the family man. His gets a more personal, affectionate remembrance.

Glenn Hoddle and Matthew Harding are the subject of wellresearched quickie biographies, but Chris Waddle, for the second time, suffers a bland portrayal by his lawyer. Kirk Blows shows how an authorised biography should be written with an honest, detailed and revealing tome on Julian Dicks.

Two revered players of yesterday also received deserved exposure, Danny Blanchflower and Billy Meredith. One final biography is of a team, England. Niall Edworthy's coffee-table review may be "official" but it is

harlton

urbishle)

Have books will travel to France 98

Planning to follow England or Scotland to the World Cup in France next summer? Don't leave home without The Rough Guide to European Football: A Fans' Handbook (Rough Guides, 5 £14.99), writes Phil Shaw.

Peterjon Cresswell and Si mon Evans, who researched and wrote its 600-plus pages, \$ worked from the premise that a true European away trip is a cultural experience. As well as supplying masses of detail to fill in the gaps left by guidebooks which tell you you can "find a game most Sundays", they provide suggestions of places to eat, drink, shop and sleep.

There is also advice on travel to more than 50 destinations in 27 countries, as well as plenty of nuggety reading to pass the time on long train journeys. When in Marseilles, England supporters should remember to be sniffy about Paris. Their Scottish counterparts will no doubt find Le Jimmy a suitably named bar in Bordeaux.

At nearly twice the size, though not double the price. The European Football Yearbook, edited by Mike Hammond (Sports Projects, £22.95), is a must for the statistically inclined student of the Continental game. down of results, appearances and honours for everyone from Andorra to Zagreb, with details of the World Cup qualifying

ister City FC keen

campaign for good measure. Closer to home, nobody does nostalgia with quite the style of the Derby-based publishers Breedon. Tony Matthews' A-Z of Stoke City is typical of their lovingly designed, fact-packed efforts. Containing potted biographies of 800 Potters, from Lucien Boulimmier (wing-half son of a Parisian ceramic artist a century ago) to the Waynes and Darrens of today, it serves as a timely memento of Stoke's 119

years at the Victoria Ground. The emphasis in Breedon's Illustrated History series is pictorial, with a pithy narrative. New volumes on Chelsea (by Scott Cheshire), West Ham (by John Northcutt and Roy Shoesmith) and Tottenham (by Bob Goodwin) maintain the high standard.

More expensive but worth chitects should consult this book.



All our Saturdays: Aston Villa players of the 1920s relax in their recreation room at Villa Park. The photograph features in Simon Inglis' evocative book, 'Villa Park: 100 Years'

Photograph: Colorsport

The wit of Harry Pearson,

How Claridge thrived despite Aldershot's bouncing cheques and rotten turkeys

more chequered than a Croatian shirt. If your mental picture of the journeyman striker is of Leicester, where he finally him wheeling away to celebrate a goal then you have not read his entertaining memoir. Tales From the Boot Camps (Vista, £5.99) finds Claridge stuck in a ditch, beneath a tractor after an incident with a melon.

Only two books, Eamon Dunphy and Peter Ball's Only A Game? and Fred Eyre's Kicked Into Touch, have got inside the humour of the game as successfully as Claridge and his collaborator, Ian Ridley, The Independent on Sunday's Football Correspondent. Confirming that failure makes for better football literature than success, his time at Aldershot forms

the most compelling chapter. Cheques bounced, overnight stays were out (even to Carlisle) and the Christmas turkeys from the club were rotten. When Claridge bought a video of a match in which he had scored a hat-trick, he recognised the

heard above a moaning fan.

cracked it, that Claridge calls "the happiest time of my career". But there's much more: more than verbal) with the lord of long-ball brutalism, John Beck, to the circus that was Brady (as it were) and Barry Fry. Highly recommended.

Claridge plays with his socks rolled down. So did Robin Friday, though whereas Claridge has made the most of a modest talent, Friday literally pissed his exceptional ability against a station wall. The sadness of The Greatest Footballer You Never Saw, by Paolo Hewitt and Oasis bassist Paul McGuigan (Mainstream, £9.99), is that the former Reading striker is not around to enjoy the belated acclaim. He

was found dead seven years ago.

From Weymouth to Wembley, commentator as the team's bus for excess. He spent one New Steve Claridge's journey was driver, who was struggling to be Year's Eve drunkenly dancing on pub tables. In the morning It is Aldershot, rather than he scored twice despite being

marked by Bobby Moore. Drink, aka The Bevvy, plays no small part in Ian Black's Tales of the Tartan Army (Mainstream, from clashes at Cambridge (one £8.99). In Italy, after capitulation to Costa Rica, Scotland supporters sought solace in vino collapso. Their adapta-Birmingham under Karren tion of "I'll Never Fall in Love Again" burned into Black's

What do you get when you drink the wine? A £10 fine and a year's pro-

Knee in the balls at the polis

I'll never drink the wine again We also encounter the sinister Kilt Police, armed only with boot polish, and learn the bittersweet saga of Bodyswerve and the bairn that never was. For all their overseas tours of dutyfrees, Wembley brings the best Friday was a pigeon-toed ex- out of the footsoldiers. In '75, asphalter with a penchant for as the English goals rained in, THE UNSUNG HEROES .

BY PHIL SHAW to four." When it ended 5-1 they

gloated: "They couldnae make

The Tartan Army are more likely to be found at East Fife or Forfar than Ibrox or Parkhead. David Bennie's A Season in Hell (Mainstream, £14.99) is an idiosyncratic, sad and sometimes hilarious travelogue around all 37 Scottish League venues. A sort of Bill Bryson-meets-Nick Hornby, it must be the first book to compare Cumbernauld and

Cowdenbeath with Chicago and Albania respectively. Bennie's title would have been equally apposite for Stephen North and Paul Hodson's account of the fight to save Brighton & Hove Albion. Instead they came up with Build a Bonfire (Mainstream, £14.99) - as in the song - which is one spectacular goals and a passion they sang: "We'll support you up of the few courses of action

The bulk of the book comprises the views of "ordinary" supporters. There is also a guide to how to depose your chairman (right down to picketing his house in a quiet village) and suitably vitriolic verse by Attila the Stockbroker.

The Herefordshire hostelry where 40-odd inebriated Brightonians celebrated League survival with a mass, Wayne's World-style singalong to "Bohemian Rhapsody" must have been a sight to behold. Essential reading in Doncaster.

From the Midlands come

two unusual perspectives. Steve Stride is the Aston Villa-crazy kid who progressed from office boy to secretary and director, in which time he has seen five chairmen, nine managers and hundreds of players come and go. Stride Inside the Villa, with Rob Bishop (Sports Projects, £8.95), is full of behind-thescenes anecdotes.

Jo Venglos took defeat like no manager Stride has seen. of the "new football writing" in Once, after his team were more ways than one.

campaigners did not follow. booed off, Dr Jo's wife Eva the polemicism of Ed Horton (whose English was not great) muttered: "Poor my husband." and the strident clarity of the magazine's founder, Mike Tich-One of the players' wives said politely: "You mean my poor er, stand out. Ticher's piece husband." Eva nodded: "Yes about Matthew Harding goes against the received wisdom him too. without coming on remotely like

David Instone, of Wolverhampton's Express & Star, has produced an insightful reporter's diary of another year of Molineux under-achievement in Wolves: Exclusive! (Thomas Publications, £6.99). The day after Dave Bassett quit Crystal Palace for Nottingham Forest, Instone overheard Mark McGhee being complimented

on his sharp suit and tie. "Got to be smart today." replied the Wolves manager, sending himself up. "I've got an interview at Palace."

When Saturday Comes has played an influential role in the increased assertiveness of supporters. Power, Corruption and Pies (Two Heads, £9.99) collates the best of 10 years' journalism in WSC, which was way ahead

Ken Bates, while Nick Hornby mounts a stout defence of Fever Alan Edge's Faith of Our Fa-thers: Football as a Religion (Two Heads, £9.99) sounds and looks like an academic treatise to accompany a Channel 4 documentary. It is actually a personal,

often amusing account of growing up on football-mad Merseyside, mixed with observations on the modern game. identified with the author when he recalls the reaction of his Christian Brother teachers to the innocent carving of players' names on his desk. And who can put his hand on his heart and

United replica kit?

This reader particularly every penny, Simon Inglis' Villa Park 100 Years (Sports Projects, £24.95) is a historical tour de force whose title is too modest by half. The intrigue and incident unearthed by Inglis goes back to 1600. Doug Ellis, Aston Villa's say he has never leapt out of his chairman, has a new, £16.5m recar, like Edge, to berate a small development plan. Before boy for wearing a Manchester touching a single brick, the ar-

Why fragmented television coverage threatens appeal of Five Nations

There is a tendency for observers of First (or, as they are now called, Prethe rugby scene to write about the mier) Division football teams that administration of the game rather have come to resemble conferences than about changes in the game it- of the United Nations. We have also self. This is natural and, up to a seen the clubs show - to put it at its

changing hands and may yet send several clubs into the arms of the receiver. There are the proposals of Cliff Brittle, of the Rugby Football Union, that the union should contract directly with English international players and that there should be only 24 professional clubs divided into two divisions.

The logical consequence of Brittle's proposals is that there should be one set of laws governing the game, but two governing authorities comparable to the Football Association and the Football League. In the past 30 years we have seen

most polite - rather less than full co-There is the silly money which is operation towards the national teams in the British Isles.

The consequence of these developments is that in football the Home International Championship has been extinguished, to be replaced in public esteem by the World Cup, the European Championship and various European competitions involving the clubs.

I do not think rugby will incvitably go the same way. But it will go part of the way. Indeed, it has already travelled some of the distance.

The Five Nations' Championship

peal. Come 2.30 or three o'clock on alternate Saturday (and now Sunday) afternoons from January to March, rugby followers will no longer be able to switch on BBCI in the confident expectation of hearing the reassuring tones of Bill McLaren. Instead, for all England's Twickenham games, and for France v England from Paris, they will have to pay handsomely for the privilege of listening to Miles Harrison

This fragmentation of television coverage - part of the competition on Sky, part now on ITV and part still on the BBC - is bound to have an effect on the general appeal of the competition. Those who think tradition conquers all should rewill no doubt retain its appeal. It has, member that in football England v

and Stuart Barnes on Sky.

however, already lost part of that ap-



ON RUGBY

Scotland, whether at Wembley or Hampden Park, was one of the great events of the winter sporting calendar. Today it is no more, gone, in

a puff of smoke. I am not predicting that England alike. Tackles made, tackles missed.

v Wales, at Twickenham or the unturned possession; on and on it goes, necessarily rebuilt Cardiff Arms and no doubt it is all very valuable. Park, will go the same way. But forthcoming international fixtures are not carved in tablets of stone.

Apart from all this, what about the game? This season has seen rugby union become more and more like rugby league. The two teams spread out and advance on each other until their noses are virtually touching. Though I have not done a count, more and more penalties seem to be awarded for encroaching. Referees do their best and keep shouting "get

Mention of counts brings me to the statistics - "stats" as they are called - which now play the principal part in post-match analyses by television commentators and team coaches

But statistics are often wrong. to help a colleague who was reportmy figures were different, sometimes half simply bounces the ball off the markedly so, from the official version. outside leg of the loose-head prop? If a forward from the Reds leaps, down but the ball comes out of the ensuing ruck or maul on the Whites'

the throwing-in side, and the bookcr is blamed, often unjustly, when it does not. At scrums, possession has long gone to the side doing the putting-in, partly because the scrumhalf has been allowed to get away

This season front rows have, however, been collapsing more frequently than usual. How long will it be, I won-When I have kept a line-out count der, before scrums become meaningless and messy formalities, as ing a match. I have usually found that they are in league, where the scrum-

catches the ball cleanly and brings it law about tackles is in a mess. There And the interpretation of the was a time when referees would penalise virtually any high tackle as beside, it seems perverse to say the Reds ing dangerous. I have long argued that this was incorrect and that there were Possession is now meant to go to circumstances in which a player could legitimately be "smothered" or have his shoulders held. But the interpretation has now gone too far in the other direction. Tacklers are being allowed to get away with what may literally turn out to be murder unless something is done about it.

Curbishley staying at Charlton

Bromwich Albion not to poach tir manager Alan Curbishley hs they seek to replace Ray Har-

statement from Charlton yesterday made it clear that Curhishley will not be leaving.

"Chariton would like to make it clear that Alan, who recently signed a new extended contract, is staying at The Val- Jones has blamed the Bosman ley," the statement ran. "Whilst the club is flattered that Alan is being coveted by other clubs, he feels positive about the future of Charlton and wishes to see through to its fruition the job he has already started."

iverpool moved swiftly yesterday to denounce reports linking Liverpool's Robbie Fowler with a move to Arsenal. A Liverpool spokesman said: "This really is fantasy football. Robbie is not for sale and is not going to be allowed to leave this club. He is Liverpool through and through."

Liverpool were concerned about a second bout of rumours surrounding Fowler in the past few weeks. Fowler is on a five-year contract that still has lan the two clubs agreed yesfour years to run, and when the terday. Ganz, 29, will bolster a 22-year-old signed his new deal Milan attack that has flounit was made clear that Liverpool dered much of the season and were prepared to lengthen that offer by another three years.

The Derby defender Christian Dailly could be out of action for 10 to 12 weeks after give up its rights to acquire fracturing his jaw during the draw at Bolton on Sunday. The Inter at the end of the the sea-Scotland international was in- son. In 136 Serie A matches with jured in a clash with Bolton's Inter, Atalanta and Sampdoria, Amar Gunnlaugsson, An x-ray Ganz has scored 49 goals, But later revealed the former he has just two league goals this Dundee United man had frac-season, and has not played for tured his jaw. He will undergo a month.

RUGBY LEAGUE

Charlton have warned West an operation before having his jaw wired and bolted at Bolton Royal Infirmary.

Everton's new signing Mitch Ward is doubtful for Satur-Albion have been linked day's trip to Leicester after with Curbishley following Har- taking two heavy blows on his ford's departure for Queen's right ankle during his side's Park Rangers last week, but a goalless draw with Wimbledon

> Southampton have pulled out of a bid to sign the former England full-back Tony Dorigo from Italian club Torino. The Southampton manager Dave ruling for his failure to bring the 31-year-old former Leeds and Chelsea player back to England.

"We were interested but we would have owed Leeds money and it all fell through without us even speaking to the player," Jones said.

Middlesbrough's 18-yearold winger Anthony Ormerod has signed a new four-and-a-half year contract, committing him to the First Division leaders until the summer of 2002. Ormerod's England Under-18 team-mate Andrew Campbell, also 18, has agreed to sign a sim-

The Internazionale striker Maurizio Ganz will move from the Italian league leaders to Miis now without the Liberian star George Weah, who will be out for a month with a back injury.

In exchange, Milan agreed to winger Francesco Moriero from

Boys from Brazil: A newly shorn Juninho (left) watches from the bench as his side draw 0-0 with Australia in the Confederations Cup Photograph: Empics

McLintock backs Wenger's revolution

Arsenal captain, believes Arsène Wenger can pull the Gunners out of their present slump and still inspire a Premiership title challenge by remixing his Continental flair with the British basics which worked so well under George Graham.

at Highbury was all the rage earlier this season when Arsenal reeled off a dozen unbeaten League matches and defied the critics who said he still had too many players who were too

Wenger's French revolution

of the last six and were jeered off by their own fans at the end that is just an easy way for peo- have to spend. Everybody point-

Frank McLintock, the former of a humiliating 3-1 home de- ple to get headlines in the pafeat by Blackburn Rovers last Saturday.

Wenger virtually admitted he does not know what has gone wrong, but McLintock, captain of the famous Arsenal Double winners in 1971 and still a passionate Arsenal fan, insisted: What he does know is that they cannot have become a bad team overnight.

"I'm not going to knock Arsène Wenger because this man has a record and a reputation which shows he is one of the finest coaches in the world. I But Arsenal have lost four wouldn't dream of trying to tell It cannot be done just like that, him how to do his job because no matter what money you

"But I hope he will understand that I'm speaking from the heart and with the best intentions for him and Arsenal when I say he's got to get back to the nitty-gritty of the team's traditional strengths to get them going again."

McLintock, now working as a pundit, added: "He has some tough decisions to make but I think he will be brave enough to make them.

"And I'm not talking about wholesale changes in personnel.

ed to Arsène Wenger's quality when things were going well. Now he's got to show that the old ability to bounce back is still

"I've loved the way he has made Arsenal such an exciting team to watch. Change has to happen and he encouraged the players to show their creative ability, but Dennis Bergkamp and Ian Wright are still so important to that ideal and at the moment they are both off the

"When that happens, as it players, you've got to revert to the basics - and make sure that

well you are still difficult to beat. "I think Blackburn have now got it down to a tee. To me, they are the new Arsenal or even the new Liverpool - the way Liv-

Shankly and Bob Paisley. "The ideal is a balance between the best of British and European styles and it has been achieved by Alex Ferguson at Manchester United - playing with style but also competing said.

with great desire. does now and again to all top players to be a force. I don't times start to be popular agree that they are too old yet because age doesn't matter if ; even when you are not playing you show you can still do it." - of leg two and currently second

SAILING

Whitbread yachts stay in close contact

The cards are still being shuffled for the nine Whitbread Round the World yachts in the Great Australian Bight and no one has yet been dealt what looks like a winning hand. The computer says that Toshiba is closest to Sydney but, with over 1500 miles to go and 10 miles separating the first seven, racing is tight for the whole fleet almost for the first time in the race.

All the yachts are heading south-easterly at approximately the same speed with the most significant difference being the spread of about 60 miles from north to south.

The back marker, but also the most southerly, is Knut Frostad in Innovation Kvaerner, racing hard again after repairing a damaged mast. "It's hopefully an investment worth paying for early," he said.

Paul Cayard, the skipper of Sweden's EF Language, was in the lead and also the most northerly yacht. He reported that the first 40 hours of the leg had been as tough as any he had

Cayard also reported a problem with his mainsail, which was doubly unusual as the all-woman crew on sistership EF Education suffered the same damage. Cayard claimed 15 minutes for a repair. Christine Guillou said it took

The skipper of Merit Cup. Grant Dalton, feared for the fleet with upwind conditions making sailing very difficult. but predicted the fleet would erpool were when they won all have some relief in next few their trophies under Bill days.

> "No way can you call the last 24 hours pleasant when yesterday was filled with constant tacking in fresh wind, no sleep for the boys and lots of water flying around," Dalton

"The boat is very wet down "But Arsenal still have the , below and only today will meal

Gunner Krantz, the winner in Swedish Match, was another troubled skipper. He asked for a change in the rules against sailing the water-ballasted 60footers upwind, and limiting the number of tacks they could make on any one leg.

RUGBY UNION

are considering audacious plans to take the 13-a-side code into taking a fixture to Leicester, it could be used as a means of es-± aunion territory of Leicester tablishing the level of interest." Leicester City, the Premiertargets for Super League exship football team, are keen to stage rugby league at Filbert

Leicester City FC keen to stage league

Street, only a short distance from Tigers' Welford Road home. Sir Rodney Walker, the Rugby Football League chairman who is also chairman of the publie company that owns the football club, would like to take a lenge Cup. The decision to omit Super League fixture to Filbert Oldham, who were Cup winners Street to test the waters.

"The people at Leicester City have indicated to me that. if the opportunity arose, they are League officials after the old club serious about staging rugby league, "Sir Rodney said, "It the launch of the new club, will lid be premature to contemplate them applying for a early November when Oldham £85,000.

Rugby League administrators Super League franchise but, if two teams were interested in

> pansion, with bids for 1999 Super League franchises due to be considered next May.

Oldham club are to seek legal advice after being told they will not he included in this season's Chalas far back as 1899, from the game's best-known knock-out competition was taken by

The Midlands is among the on Sunday night that his club would not be the Cup, said: "We will be seeking advice. There has been a total lack of communi-Angry officials of the new

League teams join at the fourth

went into liquidation and before "Decisions had to be taken in son, who claims he is owed. Dunbar Premiership match at

weren't in existence," an RFL spokesman. Peter Rowe, said. The Oldbam chairman. Christopher, Hamilton, who

> cation at the RFL since we first submitted our business plan." The other 18 First and Second Division clubs join 22 amateur survivors from this weekend's second-round ties in the third round on 31 January. The 12 Super spokesman said: "He is having

round on 14 February. A winding-up petition against Batley was lodged in the High Court yesterday by the former chairman Trevor Hob-

tistician Owen Peck had been ap-pointed the new coach after the

pointed the new coach after the resignations of Chris Jones and Neil McEldull in the wake of the owner Greg Fullerton's departure. However, Ryan Williams, the centre who had taken over the coaching role after McEldeuff resigned, admitted he will be the one in charge. "I'm really the head coach, but we're trying to stay away from that because of the work

away from that because of the work visa situation so Owen gets the title and he's the eyes on the bench," Williams said.

Adrian Dodson, the Guyana-born fighter who is self-managed, has finally realised his hopes of a pay-day after 19 months when he challenges Ronald Wright, of the United States, as the Wight Dodsonstate.

for the World Boxing Organisation light-middleweight championship at the London Arena on Friday.

Gwyn Jones, the Wales captain, is said to be comfortable after spending a third day in hospital after suffering a serious game against Swansea.

The 25-year-old Cardiff flanker suffered a compressed spinal cord when he was trapped at the bottom of a ruck and complained of having no feeling in his arms and legs. He is being constantly mon-

itored by doctors at the University Hospital of Wales and a extensive treatment and there has been a slight improvement."

The Leicester hooker, Richard Cockerill, celebrates his 27th birthday today with a recall to the side for the Allied Richmond.

victory over Sale, Tigers' coach, | chance to stake their claim for Bob Dwyer, rotates his squad a place in Thursday's crunch with the club just one game into

and Cup matches in 22 days. Craig Joiner comes in on the right wing for Austin Healey, head and Will Johnson comes in at No 8 for Eric Miller.

John McHarg has resigned as coach of the Scottish Premiership Second Division side, his players of lacking passion for : sternest test in their quest for

McHarg announced his resignation after Saturday's surprise 19-8 home defeat to be between us and them, both Peebles - their second in three in the group and for the trophy." matches.

CRICKET

'Slight improvement' in Gwyn Jones England players to stake claim

Despite Saturday's 55-15 England's players have their last World Cup game against Ausclaimed he was told by a reporter neck injury during Saturday's a hectic schedule of six League tralia when they face Ireland in Pune, India, today.

Having gained the maximum 18 points from the first Perry Freshwater takes over at three of their five pool matchloose-head prop with Graham es. England will be confident Rowntree switching to tight- that their unbeaten record against the Irish will remain intact. England lead Australia in their pool by three points, while

Ireland trail on nine. And England know the Ausa third World Cup title. Their captain, Karen Smithies, said: "Everyone seems to think it will

pressed in their three matches so far, twice scoring more than 300 runs with two players bagging centuries.

But they have allowed all three opponents - South Africa. Pakistan and Denmark - to complete their allotted overs, while Australia took only 37 balls to beat Pakistan and 28.5 overs to dispense with South Africa. Their match against Ireland was rained off.

Smithies, however, is unperturbed by the statistics and said: "We have had to work Kilmarnock Falcons, accusing : tralians will provide their harder in our games and been able to learn from our mistakes.

"But we need to reduce the extras tomorrow. I. and probably others, was guilty of not concentrating when Pakistan were batting against us. We must put that right tomorrow."

TODAY'S NUMBER

The police officers injured in disturbances after Napoli went down to their ninth defeat in 12 games in Italy's Serie A on Sunday. The Napoli fans responded to a 4-0 defeat by Parma by burning anything they could find on the terraces of the San Paolo stadium.

SPORTING DIGEST

American football AFTE-PICATI FOOLDER NFL: Altura 20 Philadelphia 17; Baltunore 21 Termessee 9; Jackschwife 20 Buffato 14; Cructurall: 37 Delass 24; Indianapolis; 41 Alum 0, Detroit 14 Minnesota 13; NY Jets 31 Tampa Bay 0, Geen Bay 31 Carolina 10. New Orleans 27 Anzona 10; Seattle 22 Colland 21; Kansas City 29 San Diego 7; Chicaco 31 St Loss 10. Arizona 3 CENTRAL DIVISION †Green Bay 12 *Tampa Bay 29 Detroit 8 Minnesota 8 00 13 St Louis 10. AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE EASTERN DIVISION 3 0 350 219 3 0 417 250 8 0 327 353 n 0 315 399 11 0 263 387

TODAY'S FIXTURES

Football

23 SCOTTISH LEAGUE SECOND DIVISION for Clyde v Quoen of the South

pOI telon v Broch House Sulbury Variations
/ Combattley
25 RYMAN LERGUE Promier Division: EschObligation from v Variation, Harmoton v
Sharborn Fergis, Secand Division: Bisetter v
Witeram, Horstam v Washston: Talen Division: Wingde S Friedrey v Comman Carsels: Guardien Bearrance Cup third round
CNT Carryoy Bland v Hitter Carryation v Bibercay (1958 Remind v Brombey (1955 St All
WO Carry v Bedford Town (1955), Webrigham v

weiser League continued yesterday

NBA: Seattle 107 LA Cappers 101: Atlanta 93 Sacramento 89: Vancouver 110 Houston 105, LA Lakers 119 Dallas 89.

Basketball

Watton & Hersham (745) Full Members Cup second round: Leitherhood v Chertsey Associate Members Trophy second round: Axelev v Cherhart.

UNIBOND LEAGUE First Division: Congestriv Droykeden League Cup third mounts 4: Proceed of the Processor of t

IEWSON EASTERN LEAGUE Premier DIvision, Drai v Woodbridge (745) JEWSON WESSEX LEAGUE: Lymngton v Gosport, Andovor v Eastleigh, Bournemouth FC v Totton Wimberno v Thatsham WINSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE First DIVI-

AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION First Division: Americal v (powich (2.0), Crystal Palace v Luton (2.0) of Plough Lane), Milwais v Cartinon (2.0), Durens Park Rangers v Portsmouth (2.0)

Cricket **Rugby Union**

SCREWFIX DIRECT LÉAGUÉ Premier Di-vision: Mangatsfield y Paulton Rovers. LEAGUE OF WALES GILBERT CUP Sec-and Round second leg: Rhayader (f) v Bu-ry (2) (730)

AMPIONS' TROPHY (Sharjah): India v si Indias (10,30). WOMEN'S WORLD CUP Group A (Pune, Ind): England v Iroland (50am).

THE TIMES FA YOUTH CUP Second round: Manchester City v West Bromwich Al-

ALLIED DUMBAR PREMIERSHIP ONE: Basketball

TOUR MATCH (Devenport; third day of four): Tasmarea 535 for 5 dec (D F Hits 68, J Cox 73, S Young 45, D Marsh 129no) and 27 for 0; South Airica 402 for 8 dec (W J Conje 45, M V Boucher 55, A A Donald 55no). 55m).
SUPERSPORT SERIES (Final day of four): Johannesburg: Gauteng 381 and 253-5 dec; Border 216 and 235. Gauteng won by 183 runs. Paart Boland 165 and 265; Western Province 121 and 242. Boland seen by 67 runs.

255; Western Province 27 and 242, 804and won by 67 runs.
WONEN'S WORLD CUP (Chandigarh); New Zealand 253 for 9 (50 overs); West Indices 55 (29.4 overs), New Zealand won by 198 runs. (Mohan Nagar); holds 175 for 8 (40 overs); Netherlands 92 for 9 (40 overs), Indiversand 92 for 9 (40 overs).

Football

FA CARSLBERG VASE Fourth-round draw: Taurbon v Herne Bay, Camberley Town or Sudbury Wenderers v Bedington Terrens; Cadby v Tooting & Mitcham; Huderall v Wrothers; Billingham Town v Bodmin; Tow Law v Brook House or Hason; Kutsgrove v Brache Sparts; Brantinee v Lymnigton; Stamford v Potters Bar; Cowes Sports or Chard v North Ferrby; Sudbury Town v Burscough; Tiverton v West Auckland; Spelding v Birstal; Stortoid v Porthleven; Citheroe v Burgess H4; Greet Wakering v Folkestone Inviota. (Tiee to be played Seturday 17 January 1998).

WORLD RANKINGS (US unless stated):
1 G Norman (Aus) 1149pts ave. 2 T Woods
1076; 3 N Price (Zimi 993; 4 E Es ISA) 989;
5 D Lone 9 806; 6 C Montgomerie (GS) 859;
7 P Michelson 855, 8 M Ozals (Jepan) 805;
7 P Michelson 855, 8 M Ozals (Jepan) 805;
9 M OMesra 798; 10 T Lehman 787; 11 J
Leonard 700; 12 D Duval 687; 13 S Hoch
685; 14 B Faxon 666; 15 N Fatto (GS) 644;
18 V Smpl (Fiji 642; 17 S Elkington (Aus)
640; 18 J Pamerik (Swe) 565; 19 T Wetson 547; 20 F Couples 547.

Ice hockey NHL: San Jose 2 Chicago 1; Philadelphia 3 Tampa Bay 0; Phoenix 3 Detroit 3 (ot).

Rugby Union David Campese, who retired from trom international rugby after this year's World Cup Sevens, has agreed to captain Australia in sevtournaments in Argentina and Uruguay next month.

AUSTRALIA SEVEN-A-SIDE SQUAD (to tour South America): D Campase (capt), R Constable, B Durn, W Gordon, N Gregorala, C Hughes, N Lavelle, J Moss, R Nalatu, B Pagne S Tayreseria

Skiing Jure Kosir, of Slovenia, was the sur-

prise leader of a floodlit men's World Cup slalom yesterday after he clocked 55.70 seconds in his first run. "It felt perfect today and im just glad I can still ski like that after all giad I can status sin eve that are rail the problems I've had in recent years." he said after eclipsing the 56.27 set by the Austrian defend-ing World Cup champlon Thomas Sykora. Kosir's sofitary World Cup success was in 1993 at Madonna di Campiglio, also in Italy. He took a bronze medal in the 1994 Olympics but has won nothing since. Sykora held on to second ahead of the Norwegian Finn Christen sagge on boas but Austras cur-er great hope, the Otympic champion Thomas Stangassinger, had to settle for 21st with a disap-pointing 57.88. The Local hero Al-berto Tomba, back on the piste where he won his first World Cup. races 10 years ago, skied cautiously to record 57.50 for 17th. Tomba has said this will be his last World Cup race at Sestnere and wants a good result to dedicate to his late friend Giovanni Agnelli, the heir to the FIAT car empire who died of cancer aged 33 on Saturday. Kristinn Bjornsson, the Icelander who came from nowhere to claim second place in the first slalom of the season at Park City, Utah last month, skied out ear-

ly in the first leg. Snow and poor visibility in Val disere France yesterday forced the cancellation of training for a rescheduled women's World Cup downhill. The race, originally sched-uled for Veysonnaz, Switzerland, was moved to the French resprt because of a lack of snow in the Swiss

Alps. Last week a women's super G and giant statom scheduled for the French Olympic resort had to be postponed because of poor con-ditions while a men's downhill was moved to Val Gardena, Italy.

England's batsmen have im-

Snooker The German Open's future hangs in the balance efter sport's governing body, the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association, reached the

his 9-4 victory over John Parrott in the

end of its three-year contract with Eu-rosport and negotiations must take now place in order to gain a repeat booking. The crowds have been bril-lant and the venue has been great, said John Higgins, who will carvas for a return be Bingen in 1998. Higgins re-ceived a standing ovation from a full house at the Atlantis Rihelmhotel after his 9-4 victory over John Parrott in the

Sports awards

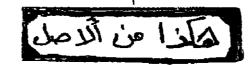
Greg Rusedski and Denise Lewis were yesterday named as the 1997 Sportsman and woman of the year by the Sports Witters' Association of Great Britain. Rusedski follows Sunday's nights triumph in the BBC Sports Per-sonality of the Year to become the first ternis player to receive the SWA's

Will backup become the new rock-n-roll?

We can't promise to make it that interesting, but the new HP Colorado 5GB tape drive is certainly a star performer! It will back up 2GB in just 36 minutes. And it's by far the easiest to use with supremely user-friendly software for full PC system protection. Exactly what you've come to expect from Hewlett-Packard. And all for just \$150: For full details ring HP now.



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A former rock musician and an American property tycoon may join forces in an attempt to take control of Portsmouth Football Club. Mark Pierson reports

Brian Howe, the former lead singer with the Bad Company rock group, is to hold talks this week with the Portsmouth director, Martin Gregory, with a view to buying a stake in the cash-strapped club.

Howe, a lifelong Portsmouth

area, has at his disposal the fi- although we cannot go into denancial backing of an American property tycoon, Vince Wolanin. Howe was at the First Division club's defeat at Ipswich on Saturday after flying in from his

week in Britain.

He will meet with Gregory, who owns 46 per cent of the shares in Portsmouth and whose sale of a further 51 per cent share to the chairman, Terry Venables, recently reached a stalemate.

A Portsmouth spokeswoman said yesterday: "We can confirm that Mr Gregory will be having

fan whose family still live in the talks with Mr Howe this week, tail until there is something to

"Mr Howe's intentions have been well documented, but as to what might happen in terms home in Florida to spend a of the club's future or stadium, we don't really know quite yet."

Howe said at the weekend: "Vince is very interested in doing a deal - building a stadium primarily. We have to sit down with the owners of Portsmouth porters were injured as violence Football Club and decide if the price is right."

A deal is not believed to be imminent because Wolanin, who earned his fortune build-

ing sports stadiums in the United States, is set to meet Gregory in Paris next month.

The issue of whether Venables will finally take up his 51 per cent share in the Fratton Park club has also still to be settled when he returns from his involvement with the Australian national side in the Confederation Cup tournament in Saudi Arabia.

Dozens of police and superupted during four Serie A matches in Italy on Sunday. The incidents occurred at Naples. Milan, Bologna and Bergamo.

The worst clashes were in

Naples, where Napoli face relegation to Serie B after being beaten 4-0 by Parma. Napoli fans responded to the side's ninth defeat in 12 matches by

burning anything they could find on the terraces of the San Paolo Stadium and then clashing with police. Eleven police officers were injured in the incidents.

A mob of 30 hooligans tried to breach the entrance to Napoli's changing rooms, but were fended off before reinforcements arrived. Police had to use batons and tear gas to bring the situation inside and outside the stadium under control, cars

had their windscreens smashed ers, Internazionale, beat Roma by rocks and Parma's team coach was pelted with eggs.

Napoli's new coach, Giovanni Galeone, said: "I can understand people's anger. The fans who care passionately about the side behave like a lover who has been betrayed.

"And when that happens, people insult each other and it can even sometimes lead to shooting and stabbing." Napoli's Argentine skipper, Roberto Ayala, said: "I'm sor-

all too patient up to now." There was trouble, too, at

San Siro after the league lead-

3-0. There were scuffles during the game and baton-wielding police had to charge the Roma fans after the match. About 16 supporters and police officers were injured.

A man was also injured after being hit by a firework at Bergamo, where Atalanta fans had nearly prompted the closure of the stadium after going on the rampage two months ago.

A police charge was also needed at Bologna to prevent local fans from attacking visitry for the fans. They had been ing Lecce supporters in a square outside the stadium immediately after the game.

The tension had started even during the match, when a firework was thrown by Lecce fans after an hour's play into a nearby section of the ground occupied by Bologna support-

Police had to move in quickly to separate the two groups of rival supporters after Bologna's 2-0 win, but stones were thrown and rubbish bins upended durs ing the disturbances.

The Celtic goalkeeper, Jonathan Gould, aged 29, hair signed a three-and-a-half year extension to his contract which will keep him at Parkhead un-

when the

Secretar.

CRICKET

England enjoy a field day as Hollioake takes charge

Derek Pringle reports from Sharjah England 215-9 Pakistan 207

At first it appeared like a typical tale of England woe with Pakistan, their side packed with spicy wrist and finger spinners. bamboozling an England team check full of meat and potato allrounders - or as their coach. David Lloyd, prefers to call them, multi-dimensional players. But while England's batsman were mostly made monkeys of, their bowlers, backed by some of the best fielding in England colours, consigned Pakistan to the also-rans, with a thrilling eight-run victory here yesterday.

However, with England possessing the comforting buffer of a superior run-rate, the excitement of such a close finish was though, can work both ways and somewhat diluted. In fact, when with two balls of the over left, they had prevented Pakistan Mahmood skied a steenler. winning by the start of the 44th which Stewart, running round, over, they had qualified for the safely pouched at mid-wicket.

added incentive though and await the outcome of today's West Indies to see who they play in the final on Friday, though India need to win by something in the region of 80 runs to have any hope of joining them.

No. 3483. Tuesday (6 Decembe

swimmingly, this game was al-

But if his dismissal, when England were wallowing, possessed some of the foolhardiness of youth, he marshalled England's fightback on the field with skill, courage and determination. Once again it was his and Matthew Fleming's nerveless "death" bowling that sealed the team's win after the No 9, Azhar Mahmood, threatened to

Facing the penultimate over, with 18 runs needed, Mahmood took nine runs off the England captain's, first four balls, as blockhole deliveries failed to find their mark. Pressure

Next ball it was all over as The win did possess an Saqlain Mushtaq failed to beat Stewart's quicksilver gloves while it neatly kept their un- when the batsman hesitated beaten record intact it also en- over taking a leg-bye. The win, sured that they would not meet England's third close one in a Pakistan again, at least not row, is bound to have taken its here. Instead, England now toll on the nerves of Lloyd. For the players though, the experigame between India and the ence will toughen as much as it saps, and only persistent gremlins in the batting, have so far made this team look vulnerable.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

22 Prayer of hunter about

24 Interest in phrase to oc-

10 Outrage at bad finish (6) 25 I take subsequent action 15 Perhaps knell for those

1 None in a busful of char-

Hold spellbound in

umpteenth rally (7)

A hat for the race (5)

Pre-occupation with

sailor's pulling power

Something to look up

about receiver that pic-

acters is very good (8)

per (8)

state is appropriate for a

cur in 50% of instances

to identity false worship-

son (6)

lady (8)

a successful activity (5.3) 23 Desire to take in a gulf

For once England's pinch hitting plan came off in spades, and 76 were plundered from the

ways going to be Adam Hollioake's sternest test to date. Posting a moderate total of 215 to defend against Pakistan, the most talented side in the competition, England's novice captain was bound to come under the microscope.

win the game for Pakistan.

With everything having gone



Dougie Brown celebrates the wicket of Pakistan's Shahid Afridi on the way to England's eight-run victory in Sharjah yesterday

Photograph: Stu Forster/Allsport

thumper of the opening pair. towed Alec Stewart along in his slinstream, his flashing blade taking heavy toll of Pakistan's openon-driven six off Wasim Akram.

After he had gone, popping up a bat-pad catch to the keeper off Surrey team-mate Saqlain Mushtaq, Stewart continued the momentum. Sashaying down

tures the Queen (9)

8 One's into hot toddy be-

13 Little time to unite divid-

16 Finds source, in Homer

17 Mark is name in a shirt

18 Old copper on panel of

eye specialist (7) 19 Pal upset old doctor's

21 Thresh about as one in

equanimity (6)

bad fall (5)

that's lost (7)

oddly, of figure of speech

ed support (5-6)

perishing? (5.4)

mals (7)

Speculations about one

European group of ani-

ing an unusual type (6)

first 15 overs. Alistair Brown, the the pitch, he struck sixes off both and awkward turn, took three leg-spinners, each one as crisp and clean as spring lettuce leaf.

With the hundred up, England were looking well-placed for ing bowlers, including a mighty a total around 240 when Manzoor, in the side primarily as a batsman, bowled Stewart with a googly from around the wicket. By exploiting the rough in this way, both Manzoor and Mushtaq were able to shackle England's middle order who found anything other than singles, ex-

> tremely difficult to come by. It does not take long in oneday matches for such pressure to translate into wickets and

of the next four wickets to fall as England squandered their speedy start.

But if Hick was the only one who can consider his demise unlucky - bowled off his thigh sweeping - the dismissal of Graham Thorpe was the most doltish on an afternoon that saw more than one England batsman compete for the dunce's cap. Having already turned down Hick's request for a second run. Thorne, who had turned blind and was several steps down the

pitch, was then run out himself, ducking under Ijaz's long throw. While England's long line of

all-rounders gave Saglain catching practice, the wily off-spinner took his tally of one-day wickets for the year to 69, beating the old record of 65, which

he set last year. Pakistan have played 37 oneday games so far this year, about three times England's annual tally. Nevertheless, Saqlain is a remarkable bowler who has taken off-spin on to another plane, with a mystery ball that appears to kick away from right-hander, like a leg-break. It certainly made cuckoos of Kent's pair of all-rounders Ealham and Fleming, though judging by Saqlain's growing tally, they are not alone.

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Manzoor, with his flat trajectory

SHARJAH SCOREBOARD ENGLAND
A D Brown c Moin b Saqian
(53 min, 47 balle, 4 fours, 1 su.)
1A J Stewart b Manzoor
(96 min, 58 balle, 3 fours, 2 shi)
N V Kright b Manzoor
(60 min, 38 balls) (5 mm, 4 balls) *A J Holicalog c Africi b Man (40 mm, 27 balls, 1 four) M A Eatharn c and b Saciain (*U min, 27 balls, 1 four) M A Ealtern c and b Saciain (14 min, 15 balls) D R Brown not out (38 min, 30 balls) M V Fleming c and b Saciain, (3 min, 1 ball) (3 mm, 1 báil) R D B Croft e ljaz b Saqian

Simpson talks to India about coaching post

The former Australian captain and coach Bob Simpson vesterday denied that he had signed up with India to help their 1999 World Cup campaign, but admitted that was interested in helping the country in a part-time capacity.

Earlier Jayant Lele, the secregary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India, announced that Simpson had been appointed technical consultant ahead of the World Cup in England. The

BCCT president Raj Singh Dungarpus said Simpson was expectedin India in February. However Simpson said he had discussed the job but noth-

ing had been decided. "I cer- real problem, I'd only be there tainly had some discussions with them when I was in India recently acting as International Cricket Council referee but I haven't been officially informed. nor do I know anything about the ter, I really do." appointment," Simpson said.

They asked me whether I'd be interested in an involvement in coaching India and I said not on a full-time basis, but I would consider doing some consultancy work." Simpson said.

If he accepted the BCCI's offer Simpson would find himself working against the Australians "I don't think that would be any Marsh last year.

on a consultancy basis to assist them to do certain things. "They are a team with an

enormous amount of talent and I think they can do a lot bet-Simpson said his contractu-

al arrangement with the Australian Cricket Board required him to visit every state at least once a year in whatever capacity the states required. He chached Australia for the

hest part of a decade, guiding them to a win in the 1987 World Cup and the final in 1996 in a Test series in India next year. before being replaced by Geoff

ACROSS

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11 Expression of surprise at

12 Short book is on time of

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14 Speaking of signets? (4.9)

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